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D I B D I N'S

HISTORY

OF THE

STAGE.

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STAGE

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A  
**A COMPLETE HISTORY**

**OF THE**

**STAGE.**

**WRITTEN BY**

**MR. DIBDIN.**

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**THE PLAYERS CANNOT KEEP COUNSEL; THEY'LL TELL ALL**

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**VOL. V.**

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**L O N D O N :**

**PRINTED BY C. DIBDIN, AND SOLD BY HIM AT HIS WAREHOUSE,  
LEICESTER PLACE; LEICESTER SQUARE.**

A COMPLETE HISTORY

OF THE

STAGE.

WRITTEN BY



THE PLAYS CANNOT BE CONSIDERED AS A HISTORY

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY C. DIBBIN, AND SOLD BY HIM AT HIS WARREN, LEICESTER SQUARE, LEICESTER SQUARE.



TO  
THE MOST NOBLE  
THE  
MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.

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MY LORD,

**THERE** is no task performed with such real devotion, or that can be so properly in place, as that which springs from private inclination, and is sanctioned by public duty.

That private inclination dictates this address; witness the gratitude with which your Lordship's unexampled liberality has indelibly impressed me, and which

is irresistably my perpetual theme; and your Lordship's situation as Lord Chamberlain of his Majesty's household, and Master of the Revels, evidently renders it a public duty in me, to address a book, which professes to record a History of the Stage, and such circumstances connected with as it relate to your Lordship's high office, to you, my Lord, and to you alone.

Having, however, been formerly honoured with dedicating a work to your Lordship, my difficulty in acquitting myself of this welcome duty would have been insurmountable, had not your Lordship waved ceremony and precedent by generously condescending to relieve me from this embarrassment.

I could long dwell, my Lord, upon this subject; long indulge my willing inclination with describing in how many ways my reputation has been advanced by

your Lordship's patronage and protection; but that the same feeling which impels me to be grateful forbids me to be importunate. Nobly to confer, is the most exalted exercise of the human mind. May you, my Lord, long live to enjoy that best of propensities, so congenial to the munificent, and in particular to your Lordship; and may every object of such benevolence be inspired with the pride, and the sensibility of obligation, which is truly felt, but cannot be adequately expressed, by

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Truly honoured, obliged, and

Devoted Servant,

*C. DIBDIN.*

*Leicester Place,*

*March 25, 1800,*



Your Lordship's patronage and protection  
 be that the same favour which you  
 me to be a total forbiddance to  
 me. No body in common is the more  
 exercise of the human mind. May you  
 my Lord, have had no copy than that of  
 presentment is convenient to the  
 case, and in particular to your Lordship  
 and any other object of such  
 be injured with the public, and the  
 policy of observation which is  
 but cannot be adequately explained.

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Truly respectful, obliged, and

Devoted servant,

C. D. W.

## PREFACE.

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THIS work once collated and gathered into volumes, I had intended, as my original advertisement states, to have gone into it at length by way of preface, to have enumerated every particular that might be necessary for its illustration, to have given such reasons for every part of my own conduct as in that case would have been due to the public, and such answers to all those who have anonymously praised and censured me as might ensure my opinions the award of candour and impartiality.

When I made this rash promise, however, for rash it was beyond precedent, I was not aware that, to acquit myself of this almost impossible task, I must have added at least five volumes to those five I now publish, and all this, perhaps, to lead myself into scrapes with numerous individuals ; a predicament, which it is neither my inclination nor my interest to risk. I shall therefore content myself with a few general remarks, letting praise or censure light upon the work, according as those may be inclined to indulge either propensity, who deliberately peruse it, without which degree of attention it cannot be read to any purpose ; and, instead of shewing how readers ought to be pleased, explain in what manner I have endeavoured to please them.

The prodigious mass of materials perpetually at variance with one another, that I have had the slavery to wade through

precluded all possibility of a particular elucidation ; for they were a complete chaos of jarring atoms, out of which I defy any man to have formed a perfect historical world ; and, therefore, to have taken them otherwise than according to their general bearing, however it might have encouraged ingenuity, would not have favoured fidelity. Under this impression I have established judgment as the arbitrator between those two competitors, of which article I have certainly given up to the subject all that I possessed, which is as much as any reasonable reader can desire,

I might perhaps have exercised this necessary quality more deliberately, had not a number of circumstances intervened that it was impossible for me to have foreseen. I had no idea, when I began the History of the Stage, that I should take a circuit of between three and four thousand miles during the prosecution of it, and be in consequence obliged to dispatch copy written upon the spur of the moment to a printer, sometimes at four hundred miles distance, who, had he been paid to have involved me in every difficulty and inconvenience, could not more completely have discharged this retrograde office. I might, to be sure, have given it up at the end of the first volume, but this would have violated my respect due to the subscribers, and my regard to my own reputation ; and, as to foregoing every thing else upon this account, I appeal to the candid, for whom I have as grateful a deference as I have an ineffable contempt for cavillers, whether it would not have been a supererogate and absurd instance of quixotism, if, for the sake of watching the press, and of digesting historical matter into mere form, I had given up prospects which have confirmed my health, enlarged my connexions, and augmented my interest and my reputation, especially as by the experiment I should have lost the activity of truth, and gained nothing but its precision, in which parti-



cular, perhaps after all I have been virtually, as correct as my neighbours.

A mere history of theatrical events, I take to be a very infipid thing. I consider the Stage as a state branching from the empire of literature, and therefore an examination of its rulers, and the rise and operation of the various circumstances issuing from its general interest, cannot be related to effect without digesting different opinions and forming a rational judgment of them. In this, one is apt to be a little dictatorial, which, however, is a merit; for it implies that, after every necessary examination you have fully persuaded yourself that certain facts exist, and therefore you naturally expect an implicit acquiescence on the part of the reader, provided your general reasoning have made the matter clear. In this view, the historian may expect and ought to be credited; for, if every trivial fact were to be argued upon, the chain of narrative would be perpetually broken through, and nothing would be concluded.

It is upon this broad ground I wish this book to be judged. Indeed I think it ought to acknowledge no other authority; for I will venture to say that any thing written upon the conviction of long experience will be more likely in its essence to be faithfully authentic, than a history composed, or rather vamped, from a whole library of printed and written documents; especially when to my own knowledge many articles in even recent publications, relative to the theatre, are completely false.

It is no subject of wonder therefore, though heaven knows, I have had recourse to printed documents and written ones too, many of them, thanks to those busy gentlemen who seem to have had but little to do with their time, through the medium of

the penny post, that I have had more difficulty in avoiding fancied errors than in coming at evident truths; and here I cannot help reflecting on the egregious absurdity of those who have been so officiously friendly as to tender opinions which I could not but see, or else I must be fit for Bedlam, were traps for my veracity; and yet, poor devils, I forgive them. Indeed they are my friends without their own knowledge; for the anticipation of an injury is next to the enjoyment of a benefit. As to all those who from real kindness and friendly solicitude, have shewn an anxiety for my reputation in the course of this work, I should have to accuse myself of every thing unworthy and ungrateful if I did not feel their generosity and acknowledge the advantages derived from their advice; but of this they will be conscious, by an observation of the use I have made of their various remarks.

My great difficulty has been to curtail; for, from the large cargo of matter I have had the drudgery to consult, my task had been as troublesome as that of a manager in the shortening an overgrown play. I have therefore never teased the reader with dates of births, or deaths, or any times or actions, that I have conceived to be irrelative to the essence of the facts I have commemorated. I have also cut out second titles wherever I could; by the absence of all which extraneous matter I have been able to crib room for anecdotes and other articles which I conceived would be much more entertaining to the reader. Above all, I have as much as possible omitted Christian, or first names; a circumstance which may in some instances perhaps be taken in dudgeon, though certainly nothing can be a greater compliment. I remember, when Garrick was absurdly particular on this subject. A lady of distinction wrote her friend a minute account of the Jubilee, in the moment the little man returned home, with all his blushing honours thick



about him. In this account she frequently called him Garrick, without any prefatory appellation. He was told of it, and remarked, that it was a strange want of attention, for that it might at least have been Mr. Garrick. The lady heard of this, and wrote him a letter, professing to apologise for the omission, but yet full of close and keen irony. Among other things, she said, "that nothing could be farther from her intention than the most distant idea of an impropriety. She only wrote while her heart was full, at which moment she could no more have said Mr. Garrick, than Mr. Shakespeare."

To enumerate the various objects this subject embraces would give this address more the form of a prospectus to recommend a work, than a preface to the work itself. The History of the Stage is now published, and let it stand or fall by its general merits. It may not, however, be irrelevant to notice that music has never been treated, as it relates to the Theatre, till now.

I shall finish this intrusion by intreating that I only desire to receive that proportion of commendation to which a fair construction of the above remarks may entitle me; that the letter may be considered as comprized in the spirit of the work; that inferior faults may be liberally overlooked; in short, that I may find, as far as they are my due as to the literary part of this undertaking which rested with me, credit for good intention, industry, and discrimination, in the candour and consideration of my readers; and for the typographical part, which did not rest with me, an errata in their generosity and indulgence.





THE  
**S T A G E.**

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**BOOK IX.**

**FROM THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF GARRICK TO  
HIS DEPARTURE FOR ITALY.**

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**CHAP. I.**

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**COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH  
STAGE, AND A CONTINUATION OF AUTHORS.**

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**B**EING now upon the point of introducing the greatest actor that ever existed, for so we must pronounce GARRICK to have been if all we have witnessed of him, added to all we have been told of others, be fairly weighed and considered, it will be necessary to shew how many adventitious circumstances combined together to lend assistance to that merit which, like every thing else transcendant, received brilliancy from competition.

The collateral advantages from which GARRICK derived assistance, in a higher degree than BETTERTON, were the large and valuable stock of materials with which the stage had been furnished originally at home, as well as those imported from FRANCE; which last, however inferior to the sterling value of meritorious English productions, by lending a variety to dramatic entertainments, heightened considerably the effect of talents so versatile as those of this actor.

It will be unnecessary again to go over the ground of the French drama, or to shew that, whatever there might have been both of theatrical regularity and sprightliness, there was a paucity, and a sameness, which the worst English writers would have disdained to copy, or, indeed, if they had copied, the dullest English auditor would have been absurd enough to tolerate. VANBRUGH, nevertheless, turned MOLIERE and REGNARD to advantage, DESTOUCHES, LE SAGE, BOURSULT, and at length VOLTAIRE, and many others, became fashionable when metamorphosed by their English translators, and that merit which it has been pretty clearly shewn that the French originally derived from us, after being filtered into insipidity by them, regenerated by being again revived in its more congenial



foil, exactly as our golden pippin, planted in AMERICA, enlarges in bulk and degenerates in flavour, but which, replanted in ENGLAND, regains its usual size, and embibes its original sweetness.

The French authors, who died in the interval between SHAKESPEAR and GARRICK, a list of which I have before me where I count more than four hundred and fifty, many of them voluminous writers, inundated the theatre with an incomprehensible number of pieces—but what were they? The most trifling and flimzy popular anecdote was subject enough for a French comedy, and this maigre kind of diet made their season of acting plays a sort of dramatic Lent, and the Dorantes, and Erastes, the Scapins, the Crispins, and the Blaises, differently dressed and ornamented, were stuffed down their throats, like the painted eggs in *Careme*, which, whether you chuse red, yellow, blue, or purple, are still hard, undegeftible and insipid, and still eggs.

These would not content an English stomach, and, therefore, none of their plays were ever translated to advantage, except by those who knew how to incorporate with them a little stamina. When they were brought out here in that state, it cannot be denied that we have benefited by the chance;

of which the *Confederacy*, and *Zara*, are still striking proofs. The contrary has however, at particular periods prevailed, and we have seen genteel comedies, and sentimental comedies, banish for a time, fair humour and honest laughter from the stage.

But, as there will hereafter come an opportunity when we may indulge in observation upon this subject, I shall at present wave this and every thing else to bring up the account of authors till 1741, after which, to the death of GARRICK, though there will remain plenty of names, and certainly some admirable materials, it is wonderful how little that can be called excellent, will be found when the number of admirable actors are considered that gave advantage to literary fame during that period.

To prepare my way for this examination, I must slightly touch again on those whose productions are yet brought no further than 1708, and the first left in that imperfect state, was STEELE, whose private conduct, having already been noticed pretty much at large as it was involved in the history of theatrical management, it will be only necessary to speak now of *The Conscious Lovers*, his last play that was performed, though there are two other plays attributed to him, called, *The Gentlemen*, and *The School of Action*.



The *Conscious Lovers* is an instance that there is no danger in permitting an author to borrow when he knows as well as STEELE did how to improve his materials. This comedy which was produced in 1721, is imitated from the *Andria* of TERENCE, but improved exactly in the way that an excellent engraver immortalizes an insipid and spiritless painter. Here, however, the comparison drops for it is not only heightened, so as to be superlatively superior to the original, but embellished with scenes of great intrinsic merit purely the author's own. Among these are every thing that belongs to Tom and Phillis, and that admirable scene between Myrtle and Bevil, in which duelling is execrated in so noble and so dignified a manner, from which scene RICHARDSON has evidently taken more than a hint in *Sir Charles Grandison*.

We now go to Mrs. CENTLIVRE's comedy of the *Busy Body*, which proves that members of a theatre have not in all cases any very strong eventual judgment; for, as we have seen, it was expected to be damned, and even WILKS swore that no audience would ever endure such stuff. The event, as we well know, gave the lie to their predictions, and whenever there has been a good Marplot it has never ceased to be a popular play.



The *Man's Bewitched*, performed in 1710, has the usual fault of Mrs. CENTLIVRE's plays. It is flimzy; it is however sprightly and full of whim, and those, who have an inclination to leave rigid criticism at home, may laugh very heartily at many of the incidents whenever they are well acted. *Bickerstaff's Unburrying*, *Marplot*, a sequel to the *Busy Body*, and the *Perplexed Lovers* add little to this lady's reputation, and will never again, perhaps, trouble the public.

The *Wonder*, performed 1713, is certainly the best of Mrs. CENTLIVRE's plays; and, for an intricate and perplexed plot, is one of the fullest of interest and pleasantry that can be conceived. There is nothing that the dullest auditor cannot easily conceive, and yet the whole depends upon a mystery inextricable to the characters themselves. Jealousy in comedy is, perhaps, depicted in this play better than in any other, and the characters are highly drawn, and strongly contrasted. It requires, however, excellent acting, and perhaps, Felix was never represented to perfection, from its first appearance to this moment, but by GARRICK.

Mrs. CENTLIVRE seems to have written well only at intervals. The *Gotham Election*, The *Wife Well Managed*, and The *Cruel Gift*, not having the

gift of pleasing the public, or ensuring any reputation for their writer. The latter of these pieces was a tragedy, and therefore too ponderous a subject for so feeble a pen.

*A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, which except *The Artifice*, a comedy that had no success, is the last of this writers productions, was brought out in 1718. It is by no means a good play, for the language is poor, and the circumstances impossible; but there is so much of whim, contrivance, and pleasant variety in it, that it is difficult to refrain from laughing at different parts of it. The performance, however, of Feignwell is so hard a task that the part has never yet been acted in all its requisites to perfection.

SOUTHERN remains yet to be spoken of, so does CIBBER, with whom I shall finish the account of resumed authors. *The Spartan Dame*, which was produced in 1719, though it has not kept the stage, is by no means a trifling addition to the fame of this charming writer. The heroine of this play is finely drawn, and the language has a great deal of that nature, and pathos, that characterize so markedly the beauties of SOUTHERN. This play, nobody knows why, was prohibited for a considerable time. One attempt more, an abortive one, closes the list of this author's



productions, in which those requisites of exquisite beauty and impressive interest that I have with pleasure enumerated, stand highly distinguished among the best excellencies of tragedy,

CIBBER's remaining pieces are twelve in number. The *Rival Fools* was performed in 1709. It did not succeed owing in some measure to those enemies that CIBBER's comfortable situation very naturally conjured up against him. It has a resemblance of BEAUMONT and FLETCHER's *Wit at several Weapons*, but is not so good an improvement on these authors as CIBBER's amendments generally were.

*Venus and Adonis* is merely an interlude, and one of those things which managers, inconveniently enough, are now and then constrained to prepare to eke out other matter. The music was composed by PEPUSCH, who had great merit, but who too servilely shrunk under the influence of HANDEL. *Myrtillo* is criticized by the above comment on *Venus and Adonis*,

We come now to the *Nonjuror*, confessedly taken from MOLIERE's *Tartuffe*, but materially improved. The *Coquet of High Life* has never been drawn so



well upon the whole as by CIBBER; and after Lady Betty Modish, perhaps Maria, is in his boldest and truest manner. Nothing can answer the true end and drift of real comedy better than the operation of this piece upon the human mind. A pernicious serpent, under the veil of sanctity, who gets admittance into the house of a gentleman to work his ruin by the seduction of his family, it is the true province of the stage to expose and punish.

CIBBER, however, got all the critics against him, as had MOLIERE before him; and, as they were stirred up by those who did not, perhaps, chuse to appear openly, for fear of appropriating to themselves some of those fair strokes of satire which could alone be levelled against the villany of hypocrisy, they employed, by way of a vehicle, *Mist's Journal*, a paper of all work, and it is shrewdly suspected, not without great colour of truth, that POPE was not a little active in this dirty work, for it happened immediately after the damnation of that farce written by POPE, ARBUTHNOT, and GAY, which we know gave rise to the enmity of POPE against CIBBER, and introduced the *Laureat* into the *Dunciad*.

CIBBER with his usual gaiety and good nature, for it must be allowed that he had the good sense

never to be hurt by folly of this kind, speaks of this circumstance with the same coolness with which he wrote to POPE, where he most pointedly shews the malignity and burning envy that had actuated all his conduct towards him, merely one would think because nature had not given him the talent to write plays. The *Nonjuror*, in spite of all its enemies, had great success, and made a considerable addition to its author's reputation\*.

*Ximena*, performed in 1709, is a tragedy, a sort of productions in which CIBBER certainly did not excel. It is in some degree taken from The *Cid* of CORNEILLE. The *Refusal, or the Lady's Philosophy*, borrowed principally from *Les Femmes Savantes* of MOLIERE, had not so much success as it deserved. MIST and his abettors had not forgot The *Nonjuror*, and besides the severe strokes in it which were levelled at the famous South Sea bubble, were not

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\* MIST seems to be extremely angry with CIBBER that he could never so far catch him off his guard as to give him any reply, and got at last so exasperated at finding that nothing could irritate him, that a paragraph appeared in his paper, when CIBBER lay very ill, that he was dead. CIBBER, bad as he was, upon this, unexpectedly appeared on the stage and thus gave the lie direct to the libeller; which, without considering the shame it heaped on himself, MIST congratulates himself upon, calling it an answer to his paragraph.



easily pardoned by those they exposed; though nothing can be fairer game for scenic detection than any species of national fraud. *Cæsar in Egypt* is another tragedy, the subject of which is furnished by CORNEILLE. It would have been better for CIBBER and the stage if he had employed the time he took to prepare this piece for the theatre, by writing a comedy.

The *Provoked Husband*, as the world knows, was left in an unfinished state by VANBRUGH, and brought forward with material alterations by CIBBER; indeed more than half of it was written by him; VANBRUGH having written little more than that part of it which relates to sir Francis Wronghead and his family. CIBBER's enemies, however, determined to do the thing judiciously, chose to select what they supposed to be his, and right or wrong damned VANBRUGH when they thought they were damning CIBBER. This he detected to their confusion, by publishing the play as VANBRUGH had left it behind him, and thus he proved, to the satisfaction of every sensible critic, with how much judgment he had improved a celebrated author without injuring his fame.

The *Rival Queens* was a parody on LEE's *Alex-*



*ander*. We know but little of its reputation, yet, though it had some humour, it is very unlikely that it had success. *Love in a Riddle* was a pastoral, and one of the earliest pieces of this kind brought out after the *Beggar's Opera*. It is wonderful how CIBBER could see so little of probable consequences as to imagine that any thing written professedly in imitation of a piece so very popular, let whatever be its merit, could possibly succeed. There can be no doubt but party, right or wrong, wrought the fall of this opera; for it certainly had merit, and the idea of the author's endeavour to strike a ballance in favour of morality by making virtue as captivating as GAY had rendered vice alluring, was perfectly laudable; but to oppose the torrent of fashion is always madness, and CIBBER ought to have known better. The piece, cut down to a farce, under the title of *Damon and Phillida*, has always been considered as an entertaining trifle.

*Papal Tyranny in the reign of King John*, is by no means borrowed from SHAKESPEAR'S play, though written upon the same subject. In this play CIBBER, in imitation of ÆSOP, returned to the stage very late in life, for it came out in 1744, at which time its author was seventy-three. He did not, however, meet with the reception of ÆSOP;

for, in spite of the impediments nature had added to those he formerly laboured under, there was a dignity and a grace in his performance of Pandolph which the public very warmly applauded. The play had merit, but it is very probable that the actor saved the author, or at least reaped the greatest share of public favour. It is needless to say that no *King John* has since been popular but that written by SHAKESPEAR.

With *Hob in the Well*, which is well known, and no more than DOGGET'S *Country Wake* cut into a farce, we take leave of CIBBER; an author, a manager, and an actor, whose whole study was to promote the credit, the character, and the consequence of the theatre; who, in his writing, as well as in all his public conduct, was the encourager of merit, the friend of decorum, and the advocate of morality.

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## CHAP. II.

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ADDISON, GAY, FIELDING, AND HILL.

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As the authors, immediately preceding GARRICK, furnished many of the materials with which he worked out his fame, it is proper to continue a clear account of them till his appearance. We have, therefore, yet to examine all those who wrote in the interval between 1708 and 1741.

ADDISON, a very great ornament to letters in this country, who possessed many of the useful requisites of an author, and hit the middle line of writing with more felicity and exactness, than perhaps any other, claims a place here as the author of *Cato*, *Rosamond*, and *The Drummer*. It will not, however, be enough to mention his plays; for, though I cannot be of opinion with Dr. JOHNSON that it is either worth while or necessary to give our days and nights to the labours of ADDISON as the ultimatum of atchieving an English style, yet many of those labours are valuable and an advantage to literature,



The *Spectator*, certainly not originally ADDISON'S idea but that of STEELE, who began the *Tatler*, a work of the same complexion, without the participation of any other writer, has in it particular papers which have such a peculiar neatness, for what they are, as perhaps cannot be paralleled. Those essays which are written on the common and ordinary occurrences of life, are wonderfully adapted to all capacities, and at the same time they teach an elegance of speaking and thinking, they have a drift more noble; no less than that of regulating the mind, and teaching the heart to love morality.

When ADDISON goes beyond these known and obvious subjects, he however is not so happy. His zeal is as fervid, and his motives as sincere; but his arguments are often fallacious, and he seems more to have the wish than the ability to convince. As, however, common readers do not make this distinction, his end is generally obtained; and, whatever may be the nice difference which oblige men of discernment to give him that credit for the will which they cannot for the deed, it were to be wished that the youth of both sexes might be restricted from reading that abominable trash which lumbers up the circulating libraries, and obliged to treasure the admirable lessons which will be found in ADDISON'S papers in this publication.

As for the rest of his prose, it was generally provoked from him to serve that party purpose, which for the moment he espoused, and we see him promoted from a pension of three hundred a year, to the place of secretary of state, mounting step by step to the top of preferment's ladder, of which his various publications formed the rounds. All this is manifested in various papers in *The Guardian*, *The Freeholder*, *The Old Whig*, and other productions.

As to his poetry, however it might have been extolled by those whom he patronized, it has now found its level; and, when we hear from his admirers, of which they are now but few, that his *Ode to St. Cecilia* is beautifully correct, though it is a poor copy from DRYDEN, that *The Letter from Italy* is more correct, though Dr. JOHNSON accuses him of having made a goddess a horse, and a boat, in two lines by bridling her for fear she should launch into a song, and that *The Campaign* is corrector still, of which nobody remembers any thing but the *Angel*, borrowed, though it has escaped all his critics, from *King David*, we are furnished with all the praise bestowed on ADDISON as a poet.

Though I have by no means the smallest inclination to qualify the foregoing paragraph, it cannot be denied that ADDISON has some sterling merit as



a poet, but whenever poetry is derived from erudition rather than from genius it must of course be in proportion less intrinsic, and occasional and complimentary verses, however well written, claim a place only on the threshold of Parnassus.

ADDISON's first dramatic piece was *Rosamond*. It was performed in 1704, and contains, perhaps, more lines truly poetical than any thing he has written. It is, however, flimzy; and, though there is some attempt at comedy in *Sir Trusty and Gride-line*, the whole is a drawing in water colours, neat, correct, and pretty, but neither interesting, warm, or beautiful. A great deal has been urged to prove that it was a folly in ADDISON to write so well for music, which he himself says, as we have seen, ought only to be coupled with nonsense. Now it so happens that this remark stigmatizes for one thing *Alexander's Feast*, and for another thing MILTON's *Comus*, and TICKEL, ADDISON's *Dumby*, insists upon this rule so strongly, in a flaming copy of verses, that he says poetical compositions for music are "innocent of thought," meaning to shew, by a stroke of his own, that he knows what it is to be both ignorant and dull, for poetical compositions cannot think; but, if they could, it would be difficult to prove why thought must necessarily imply guilt.

It is not very material to go at length into the merits of *Cato*. It is a most ponderous tragedy, and was rated, at least, according to its weight. It ran for eighteen nights, and was ushered into notice by eight complimentary verses, besides a prologue by POPE, and an epilogue by GARTH. It is by much the best written of all ADDISON's poetical works; and, that they may securely rate its real merit, it is decided by the French to be a true model for tragedy; that is to say, it is the essence of every thing heavy, dull, and declamatory.

At the time this play made its appearance, it was considered and taken up as a party business. CIBBER tells us that the whigs applauded it as a warm compliment to their cause, and the tories re-echoed the applause to shew that they were not hurt. POPE says, that at every two lines of his prologue he was clapped into a staunch whig, and that at the same time the author was sweating behind the scenes to find that the applause came more from the hand than the head.

*Cato* has been too warmly admired, and too severely censured. VOLTAIRE has run into both these errors. Great French poets with less judgment have found in it no errors at all. DENNIS, whose observations



were always warped, has nevertheless hit upon a great deal of truth in his strictures on *Cato*. His ridicule of ADDISON's having religiously observed the unity of place, and thereby rendered the action impossible, is as good as any thing in the rehearsal, and it cannot be denied that, as to conduct, there is nothing on the stage more completely absurd than the management of the circumstances in this play.

Time has, as usual, settled every dispute upon this subject. The day of prejudice is gone by, and, without reference to any party or any opinion, we soberly find that *Cato* is more properly a succession of declamatory scenes than a tragedy; elegantly written, perfectly moral, and correctly in nature. We care no more about the characters than we are solicitous about the deliverer of a sermon; we listen to the sentiments, we admire the beauty of their language, and we are delighted with the morality they convey. We are told that ADDISON was of this opinion, but that it was hurried on the stage through the importunity of his friends. Party prejudice turned out a lucky hit, otherwise, as the experience of the present time evinces, ADDISON would have been under the necessity of upbraiding his friends for inflicting on him a mortification which his own better judgment had warned him to avoid.

The *Drummer*, out of excessive modesty, as it is supposed, ADDISON sought to have concealed his pretensions to as its author; nay, we have nothing but strong circumstances to warrant his being considered so at this moment. STEELE kept the secret till after his friend's death, and then asserted that he only knew it by a circumstance; having been told by ADDISON, who put the play into his hands while some friends were present, that it was the production of a gentleman in company. The trait is singular and has been productive of some disputation. STEELE's conduct, however, seems to be full of veracity and honour.

Willing to give every bird of Parnassus its proper feather he took an opportunity, when the feelings of the author could no longer be hurt, and indeed when the play had grown into a fame which was at first denied it, of placing it among ADDISON's works observing that it made no figure on the stage originally, though exquisitely well acted, "and when I observe this," says he, "I say a much harder thing of the public than of the comedy." It is said that both THEOBALD and TICKELL, knew the truth of this business even more correctly than STEELE, and that CONGREVE was very severe upon TICKELL for his taciturnity.



Certainly, considered as a play, it is the best in ADDISON'S works, for it is as WARTON says, 'a just picture of life and manners,' and indeed the characters have a truth and a propriety that might have served as a model, as WARTON hints, for more expert dramatic writers. There is a novelty and an interest in the fable, and none of the requisites are for a moment violated; but the misfortune is that it is correct even to coldness, and, as *Cato* was translated by DES CHAMPS, and pronounced the model of French tragedy, so was the *Drummer* by DESTOUCHES, and pronounced the model of French comedy\*.

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\* I cannot refrain from noticing the principal heads of the preface to the French play of *The Drummer*. DESTOUCHES says that he does not copy DRYDEN, and other English writers; who, after enriching themselves at the expence of French authors, write long prefaces to criticise them and turn them into ridicule instead of acknowledging their obligations to them. On the contrary he frankly owns he has borrowed this play from the great ADDISON, one of the best English authors, and who had not the least aversion to French literature, which he has proved by imitating the exactitude and the decorum of the dramatic productions of that country. This comedy did not succeed on the English stage, and no wonder, for it had too much simplicity and regularity, and too few incidents. It had too much of the wisdom of the French manners, and too little of those enormous and monstrous liberties in which the comic writers indulge themselves in ENGLAND, mocking at the unities, and stuffing their pieces full of episodes, till they no longer can be tasted or understood. He goes on censuring that satire in English authors which he

This brief account is all that comes within my province in relation to ADDISON; who, as a man, was too modest to speak in public, acknowledge his own writings, or in any other way appear to arrogate the smallest merit; yet he comfortably took to himself every lucrative situation that came in his way, and even married the mother of his pupil for aggrandizement, though he knew he should not be happy, with all the sacerdotal forbearance of a bishop at his induction, which situation he is said once to have aimed at; who was so good, that he undermined and injured almost all his friends, some of which conduct POPE called damning with faint praise. He took his friend STEELE in execution for a paltry hundred pounds, he sickened with jealousy at POPE's *Homer*, and he prevented the harmless and amiable GAY from enjoying that court favour which he had been so often promised, and was so justly entitled to; but he, no doubt, repented of these faults before he called in Lord WARWICK to shew "how a christian ought to die."

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says attacks every thing and respects nothing; not even the fair sex, who, however, take nothing amiss if they happen to have their fans with them. He at length winds up this reprobation of English dramatic writers by advising them to form themselves upon the example of the French theatre and shun the licentious works of BEN JONSON, DRYDEN and CONGREVE.



But the Gods took care of *Cato*, and fortune of ADDISON, and there is a spice of inflated vanity, of hypocritical affectation both in the author and his nominal prototype; a circumstance that posterity has pretty well regulated. We have here, however, nothing to do with him but as a writer, in which capacity he is better known by infinite degrees by those papers in *The Spectator*, where he has treated familiar and domestic subjects, in which narrow circle nobody ever moved so nimbly or so expertly, than by the rest of his writings. These will secure him a peculiar fame, small indeed, but brilliant; confined but valuable; brilliant because they infuse pleasure, and valuable because that pleasure mends the heart.

The history of GAY is so well known, his amiable, mild, unsuspecting heart, which permitted him to be bubbled by the South Sea scheme, and disappointed at court, without having the power to bear up against misfortune, has been so much pitied and applauded, for it broke by the weight of the calamity it sustained, and was afterwards universally and deservedly commiserated, that it is impossible to say any thing of this valuable man and meritorious writer here that the reader cannot anticipate.

GAY was an elegant poet, as his Pastorals, his

Trivia, his Fables, and other things evince, and in proof that I speak the general opinion, all these things are at this moment read with pleasure. It is true they are of a secondary rank ; but a great mind may be seen through an humble covering, and the violet, and the jessamine have charms in their simplicity with which the lily and the tulip, with all their gaudiness, cannot impress the heart. If poetry be meant to dignify sentiment, to exalt idea, and to charm the mind, why must the poet's reputation wait upon lofty and towering subjects, always false, and always dazzling ?

When such a poem as *Alexander's Feast* astonishes the world, a circumstance that does not happen perhaps in seven centuries, I am willing to give any enthusiastic tribute of admiration you please to the wonderful effort of extraordinary genius, and feel a fervent glow of gratitude that such celestial ideas should be conceived by a human creature ; but, for feeling, for pathos, for mental pleasure, for something delicious to the soul, I had rather, and I am sure I shall have every votary of sensibility on my side, be the author of *Black eyed Susan* than half the *Odes* of PINDAR.

'Tis the cant of great poets, and the cant of great



critics, to rate every thing domestic, every thing familiar, every thing common. among the lowest classes of poetry. This mode, however, of narrowing the avenues to the heart is a serious injury to the cause of rhyme, which, by this rule, to be great must have every thing of pomp, and nothing of sentiment; but the position is false. The conception aches at being perpetually fixed on grand objects, as our eyes are dazzled by looking full on the sun; we sicken at the glare though the genial influence it diffuses is even necessary to our existence. Thus when splendid virtues and striking qualities are brought home to us, and exemplified in real life, the fiction is realized, and the heroes, gods, and guardian angels of poets, are found to have a practical existence in the courage, love, and friendship of common mortals.

Among those capable of giving poetry this impression was GAY; who, if he had had nerve equal to idea, would have blended all that is great in his writings with all that is beautiful. His dramatic pieces are upon various subjects, and variously conducted. Some are by no means happy, but none are destitute of merit.

The *Mohocks* is a short piece attributed to this author, and generally believed to be his. It is in-

tended to expose the bucks of that day, who were a terror to all peaceable passengers, as we read in the *Tatlers* and *Spectators*. It had a laudable tendency, but being temporary we know but little of its success. The *Wife of Bath*, 1713, was GAY's first comedy, but it was an unsuccessful attempt, and was even rejected by the public upon a revival of it after the appearance of *The Beggar's Opera*.

The *What d'ye call It*, a burlesque production well known, had merit in its way. It was so well acted, as we are told by POPE, that Mr. CROMWELL, who was deaf, could not conceive how the audience could be kept in a roar of laughter while every thing was conducted with such solemnity on the stage. *Three Hours after Marriage*, though always set down to GAY, was, as CIBBER's letter to POPE sufficiently proves, the production of POPE, GAY, and ARBUTHNOT.

Every body knows that the piece failed, and that POPE grew upon this so inveterate against all dramatic writers, that he for ever afterwards envied them, and of course abused them in his writings; but it is not generally known that its failure was owing to the spirit of ARISTOPHANES which it breathed. It ridiculed most pointedly, and most undeservedly, a



very valuable member of society because he happened to be fond of fossils, and the public were not at that time ripe for that bold, ungenerous and wanton personality, which I shall certainly warmly reprobate when I come to FOOTE. It, therefore, disgusted the audience, and was in consequence very properly withdrawn from the stage.

*Dione* was a tragic pastoral, and professedly in the manner of *Amynta*, and *Paster Fido*, subjects which we have seen frequently attempted before. It has merit, but when we consider that RANDOLPH'S *Amyntas*, though performed before the King and Queen, had very little public success it is natural to suppose, however it might enrich the poems of GAY, that it was very wisely suppressed as a subject for the stage.

The *Captives*, performed in 1723. GAY was uniformly unfortunate in relation to this play. He obtained leave to read it to the Princess of WALES; but, being very timid, and his attention entirely fixed on the personages about him, as he advanced to the company assembled upon this occasion, he made a pantomime trick of his tragedy by tumbling over a stool, overturning a screen, and throwing the audience into the completest confusion. This is supposed to have been remembered during the re-

presentation of the piece, which, on this and other accounts was very little attended to.

We come now to mention a performance celebrated more variously than any other production in the English language. The reader's recollection anticipates the mention of *The Beggar's Opera*, a piece which has been criticised in all manner of ways, and which has begot all manner of opinions. Some of these I shall presently examine. In the mean time let us literally see its success.

This piece, as we are told from the notes to the *Dunciad*, was performed sixty three nights, the first season, and repeated the following season with the same extraordinary success. It was performed thirty or forty times at most of the principal towns in the kingdom; at BATH and BRISTOL it was repeated fifty nights. The ladies carried about the favourite songs in fans, and handkerchiefs, and houses were furnished with them in skreens. *The Beggar's Opera* was not only performed in ENGLAND but in IRELAND, SCOTLAND, and WALES, nay at MINORCA, and many other foreign places.

Its fame was not confined to the author. The actresses who performed Polly, till then an obscure



and not a very respectable character, became all at once the favourite, nay the toast, of the town. Her portrait was painted, and engraved, and sold in great numbers; her life was written, eulogiums in prose and verse swarmed in the newspapers, and in different periodical publications, books were made of her sayings, and jests; and, to crown all, here I quote SWIFT, "after being the mother of several anti-nuptial children, she obtained the rank and title of a duchess by marriage."

As to the tendency of *The Beggar's Opera*, as if there was no fixed rule whereby to judge of a stage representation, nothing can be more contradictory than public opinion concerning it. On one side Dr. HERRING, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, and a number of adherents, condemned it as giving encouragement to vice by making a highwayman the hero, and dismissing him with reward rather than punishment. On the other side, SWIFT, and another large party, contended that the piece was highly moral, for that it is impossible to place vice in too strong or too odious a light.

SWIFT was certainly more in the right than HERRING; for, if the great, who are severely fa-

tirized in the persons of Macheath and his gang, are truly satirized, then is the labour of GAY a valuable one; if not he wrote it only for those whom the cap might happen to fit; and, as place, and preferment, and bribes, are the vehicles through which all gangs are kept together, no doubt there are characters in the world who are obliged to make wry faces and put it on, for as to HERRING's remark, that the hero goes unpunished it is literally, but not virtually, a fact; for the *Beggar's Opera* was written as well to ridicule the Italian opera as to convey general morality, which last end the author had it in idea literally to inculcate, and therefore makes the poet say that it is his intention to hang Macheath, and either to hang or transport all the rest of the personages. "Aye," says the player, "this would be very right provided your piece were a tragedy, but being an opera it must end happily." "Your objection," replies the poet, "is very right, but the difficulty is easily removed; for, in these kind of dramas, no matter how absurdly matters are brought about." He then makes the rabble cry a reprieve, and the captain is brought back to his wives in triumph.

Under this crooked policy, those who smarted at the satire in this piece affected to shield their feelings; for no man in his senses will aver that refusing a li-



cence to the sequel to it called *Polly*, which was the next of GAY's productions, was lest highwaymen and housebreakers should be taught to glory in their wickedness; but lest corruption should be exposed.

We know that whenever a magistrate, or other forward character, has wished to add to his popularity he has pretended to deplore the immorality in the *Beggar's Opera*. Sir JOHN FIELDING did this, and others have done it; but it is difficult to say why thieves should think it necessary to emulate Macheath when they can find the examples of Turpin, and Jack Shepherd, in the *Newgate Chronicle*; and, as to any hope of their escaping unpunished, the very end of their existence would not, according to their ideas, be accomplished if every thief of them did not make his exit upon his death bed at Tyburn. For the rest, as this piece has so much of what SWIFT calls "not wit, nor humour, " but something better than either;" as the songs are most charmingly written; as the fair purposes of honest satire are triumphantly accomplished; and, lastly, as we owe to this lucky hit the ballad opera, which has very elegibly served the cause of the drama, of poetry, and of music; I know not to whom the stage in any one instance has had more obligations than in this to GAY.

*Polly* was printed by subscription. The reader has seen why it was never performed. It produced a much larger sum of money for its author than it could have done had it made its public appearance even had its success been equal to the *Beggar's Opera*, which event is impossible to have happened, for it had neither the novelty, the interest, the writing, or any other single requisite of equal merit to recommend it, and this shews how absurd those who were inimical to GAY acted, for had they let it come out, it would not only have died away unheeded itself, but have been a severer reproach to its author than its suppression; which, rather than injure GAY, lifted him into more consequence\*.

*Acis and Galatea*, a well known and beautiful written pastoral opera, has been so often repeated and attended to with so much pleasure, that it is un-

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\* This was pretty well evinced, when COLMAN revived it in the year 1777. It was then found to be an insipid, unentertaining performance. A remarkable circumstance happened upon this occasion. The Duchess of Queensberry, who had been GAY's patroness, who had made so much interest to get this piece performed, and who, finding the tide of power so strong against it, was so very instrumental in procuring its author that large subscription on the publishing it, was fifty years afterwards at this representation of it in the Haymarket. She was very old and survived her last visit to this production of her favourite but a few weeks.



necessary here to dwell upon its merits. As to the music, as a work of genius, it is clearly the best composition of HANDEL. It is astonishingly varied, and yet always pastoral; nay the very gigantic pipe of Polypheme seems to breath magnified tenderness; but I shall go into this more particularly hereafter, when I place HANDEL and ARNE by the side of each other.

*Achilles* was again an opera. It has had very little success, either originally, or at any time when it has been revived. The *Distressed Wife*, a comedy, was left finished by GAY, but not perhaps to that perfection it would have been had he lived to have seen it brought on the stage. It has been attempted, but without success. There is another thing attributed to this author called *The Rehearsal at Gotham*, which we know but little about.

Thus we have seen that no one of his pieces had success any thing equal to *The Beggar's Opera*, and the reason, in great measure, is, that they were generally upon the same plan without the merit of originality, or so fortunate a conveyance. This blunted the edge of the satire, and destroyed the interest. Another reason is that the music of *The Beggar's Opera* seems to have exhausted all that was

to be found beautiful in ballad composition, or at least it comprehended the most choice selection; for there cannot be any thing more exquisite, natural, sweet, and delightful, than those airs. Who selected them we are not told; they were harmonized by PEPUSCH; and, when we find in them that the best airs originated as far back as FERRABOSCO and RIZZIO, who only improved what was more ancient, who shall shew melodies so delicious, so affecting, so winning, as those of the English, and the Scotch.

Thus we have seen GAY leave a counter to shine in the most brilliant circles of poetic attraction; to be praised, envied, disappointed, neglected, and at last to die with a broken heart. The world are certainly the better for this; but as to himself, however he acquired applause, patronage, reputation, and Posthumous fame, his life would have been more happy and contented had he pursued any trade but the trade of a poet.

FIELDING was but an indifferent poet, but he has left behind him one species of reputation which no author ever so eminently possessed. His novels have hitherto been unequalled. *Tom Jones* is, perhaps, the finest assemblage of natural characters and



happy incidents in any language. *Joseph Andrews* has a vein of the purest and most gratifying humour within the conception of human ingenuity; and were it not that it is professedly written as a satire on one author, and in imitation of another, it would be very nearly a complete work in its kind. *Amelia* manifests a most astonishing judgment of FIELDING's knowledge of the world. There is scarcely a person or circumstance introduced in that novel but every body knows to be somebody or something already seen in real life. In short, though these novels may have—and indeed so has the sun, resplendent as it is—something to cavil at, yet the worst of them greatly excels the best of any other author, if nature, truth, interest, humour, and character are the requisites of such productions.

FIELDING's dramatic works have great merit, but they are not so well calculated for the stage as the closet. He could not write ill; and, in general, his dialogue has marks of strong nature and pointed character, but it is too witty. CONGREVE at last fell off as to success. Sweets will cloy. This is however no reproach, but as men of genius, rather a compliment to both CONGREVE and FIELDING.

As it was impossible for FIELDING to bring for-

ward any work unworthy the attention of the public, so his dramatic pieces have a considerable claim to applause, but they were in general slight and indigested as to stage effect, the author seeming to fancy that the strong and nervous style in which he was at all times capable of writing would answer every purpose. In this he was mistaken, for CIBBER, who did not write so well, by knowing the trim of the theatre and the town had at all times better success.

FIELDING's first piece was a comedy, called *Love in several Masques*. It came out immediately after *The Provoked Husband*. It nevertheless had good success, and there is certainly in it some strong and nervous dialogue. The *Temple Beau* was performed at Goodman's Fields in 1730. This was a hasty play but has nevertheless strong wit and humour; but it is more gay than interesting, which is FIELDING's great fault. The *Author's Farce*, which contains the rehearsal of another farce, called *The Pleasures of the Town*, is a thing intended to ridicule the Italian opera. This has always been done with partial success, but whoever attempts to destroy the Temple of Folly will soon see its votaries mending the depredations, as carefully, though not so laudably, as ants repair every innovation upon their nests.



*Tom Thumb* is at this moment well known. Its humour is in the truest style of burlesque. The *Coffee House Politicians* was performed at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, and had good success. It is however greatly inferior to the generality of this author's dramatic works. The *Letter Writers* had much about the same fate and possessed the same pretensions. FIELDING's five act pieces have always something good but always want consequence. The *Welch Opera*, which was afterwards called The *Grub Street Opera*, is by no means a good piece; some of the ballads are sprightly, but upon the whole it is a strange jumble.

The *Lottery* is a very pleasant ballad farce. Indeed there are very few of FIELDING's after pieces that are not very entertaining. The *Modern Husband*, 1734, was a sound written comedy, but it was not sufficiently ballanced by either pleasantry or interest. The *Mock Doctor*, taken from MOLIERE's *Medecin Magre lui*, has been always a successful favourite. FIELDING's genius seems to have a kindred feeling with that of MOLIERE; the humour however of both, though perfectly chaste and natural, had something too saturnine, something too much of CERVANTES, for general broad laugh, an ingredient considered so necessary in farces.

The *Debauchees* was levelled at the Jesuits, and to good purpose; but one species of religious hypocrisy is like another, and FIELDING was a good deal forestalled by DRYDEN'S *Spanish Friar*, and CIBBER'S *Nonjuror*, there is nevertheless considerable merit in the piece. The *Covent Garden Tragedy* is a burlesque on the *Distressed Mother*, but the characters are too low, being composed of bawds, bullies, and others of that description. It has nevertheless considerable humour. The *Miser* is certainly the most valuable of FIELDING'S plays; it is MOLIÈRE'S *Avare* but greatly improved. It is chaste, proper, and full of nature; and, would some of our modern playwrights in this age of equivoque look at the scenes of coincidence in that comedy, it might be no bad hint to correct that monstrous assemblage of unnatural and incongruous circumstances that seem now to be received as the criterion of comic writing, or rather of comic plotting. Every real well wisher to the interest and consequence of the stage must grieve to see this valuable play cut down to a farce, and performed by the most indifferent actors in the theatre.

The *Intriguing Chambermaid*, 1733, is an admirable farce. It is in some measure taken from the *Dissipateur* of DESTOUCHES, a piece with which several authors have made pretty free. *Don Quixote*



in *England* is, what one must naturally suppose, well written, for whoever copied CERVANTES so faithfully as FIELDING, and ill calculated for the stage, because mere knight errantry without spectacle never yet had success upon the English theatre. If he had carried *Don Quixote* to any other part of the world and have introduced a few elephants, or camels, and made him fight half a dozen tygers, and have decorated the stage with castles that lose their battlements in the air, about fifteen feet from the ground, the whole an outrage upon nature, and art, the redoubted knight, as mad as his audiences, might have acted every species of extravagance to the admiration of full houses.

The *Virgin Unmasked*, and *Miss Lucy in Town*, which is the sequel to it, are pleasant pieces, and claim a place among the Hoydens, Notables, Prues, and Corinnas; which, by being always in nature, give constant pleasure. *Pasquin* and all the consequences of its being performed we have already gone over as well as the *Historical Register*. *Euridice* was damned, and *Euridice* hissed its sequel, met with and deserved the same fate, for an apology for a bad piece, when an author could have produced a good one, is an insult and ought not to be admitted.

*Tumble Down Dick* was a satire upon RICH's Pantomimes, a useless one, because nobody cared about the propriety of pantomimes so they had enough of Harlequin and Colombine. *Plutus* was translated from ARISTOPHANES by FIELDING and YOUNG. It was never performed. *The Wedding Day*, acted in 1743, is a comedy which met with very little success, and indeed deserved very little. It was the last of FIELDING's pieces; who, had he lived in ease and tranquility would certainly have written better for the stage, for it is absurd to suppose that he did not know every dramatic requisite, and no man has given more abundant proof of being a complete judge of character, of effect, and of human nature.

AARON HILL, who seems to have fagged himself into learning, if not into genius; who did the task of the noble dunces at Westminster school, that his mind might have an unusual portion of exercise; who, in his thirst after knowledge, followed his relation lord PAGET, to CONSTANTINOPLE, and by this means travelled through EGYPT, PALESTINE, and the greatest part of the East, in company with a well informed tutor; who afterwards became tutor to sir WILLIAM HAMILTON, and acquitted himself, though little more than a boy, to the satisfaction of



his pupil's friends; who was the projector of nut oil, of masts of ships from Scotch firs, of cultivating GEORGIA, and of pot ash; and who, in short, as a writer had all the merit due at least to indefatigable toil and industry, was the author of seventeen dramatic pieces, principally tragedies.

*Elfrid*, produced in 1710, was afterwards rewritten and brought out in 1731, under the title of *Athelwold*. It is an exaggeration of the story of ELFRIDA, in which the character of Athelwold is so totally different from the history as to be an object of detestation instead of pity; a circumstance that totally destroys the poetical beauty of the fable. Who but such an author in stilts could have thought of making that character an object of commiseration who is a traitor to his mistress, his friend, and his king. The *Walking Statue* was a farce and a very indifferent one. *Trick upon Trick* was again a farce. It was damned on the first night.

*Rinaldo* was the celebrated opera composed by HANDEL. We have seen that it was written by HILL in English, and translated into Italian by ROSSI, the BADINI of that day. The *Fatal Vision* was a tragedy, and performed in 1716. The second title of *The Fate of Siam* is fictitious and intended

only to give the appearance of truth to enforce the facts, which are wholly invention. It is written to reprobate rashness; a kind of *Lear* in water colours. *Henry the Fifth* is a historical play, imitated from SHAKESPEAR. There is some merit in it, and the introduction of lord Scrope's niece, who had been seduced by Henry, and yet who discovers the plot upon his life, is interesting; but nobody wishes to see SHAKESPEAR's plays altered, since it is so difficult for alteration to amend them.

*Zara* was performed in 1735. In this tragedy, which is taken from VOLTAIRE, and upon the whole is his best play, if not the best play upon the French theatre, HILL has gone so infinitely beyond all his other productions, that, in point of the true requisites of tragedy, it is almost the most perfect also on the English stage. It consists of a simple, interesting, and unembarrassed story; and, being written at that time when VOLTAIRE had still all that glow of patriotism in his mind which had revolted the minds of his countrymen when he wrote *Brutus*, it was peculiarly adapted to the English stage; so that HILL had that part of the work most likely to insure its popularity ready done to his hands\*.

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\* I find an anecdote, in a French history of the English stage, re,



It is remarkable that *Zara*, both in FRANCE and in ENGLAND, had the adventitious advantage of being greatly assisted at its first representation; for as on the French stage, as I have already mentioned, it brought forward DUFRESNE, and Mademoiselle GAUSSIN, so on the English stage, a near relation of HILL performed Osman, and Mrs. CIBBER made her first appearance on the theatre in *Zara*.

*Alvira*, 1736, was also a translation from VOL-

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lative to *Zara*, so singular; that, though I do not discover the smallest trace of it in all the English materials I have collected, I cannot refrain from relating it; especially as time, place, and circumstances, very strongly combine to give it feasibility. An English gentleman, named BOND, being delighted with the *Zaire* of VOLTAIRE, employed a poet of reputation to translate it into English, and endeavoured to get it performed at Drury Lane theatre, but to no purpose. He therefore determined to get it represented privately among his friends, and chose the part of Lusignan for himself. It was performed in a concert room, in York Buildings. Neither pains nor expence was spared to render the performance respectable, and the assembly was numerous and elegant. The applause was universal and well merited, but that bestowed on Mr. BOND was much louder and more sincere than all the rest together. His acting was considered as a prodigy, and he yielded himself up so to the force and impetuosity of his imagination, that, on the discovery of his daughter, he fainted away. Here the applause was redoubled; but, finding that he continued a long time in that situation, the audience began, they knew not why, to be uneasy and apprehensive. With some difficulty, Chatillon and Nerestan, placed him in his chair, when he faintly spoke, extended his arms to receive his children, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and then closed them for ever.

TAIRE; but, though it is well written, it did not as we have seen succeed greatly in FRANCE. The truth is, it was too much after their own model in point of stage regularity, and too full of declamation, which HILL has unfortunately rendered duller than in the original. In FRANCE envy attributed it to some scribbler from whom it was said VOLTAIRE stole it, in ENGLAND it excited no envy, and therefore HILL was permitted quietly to keep it to himself.

These were all the works of HILL before the appearance of GARRICK, to whom we shall arrive, after I have in the next chapter given an account of inferior authors, from 1708 to that period.

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## CHAP. III.

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CHARLES JOHNSON, HUGHES, THOMSON, THEO.  
BALD, SAVAGE, LILLO, AND OTHER AUTHORS.

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I AM now compelled to give the account of other authors, before GARRICK, as briefly as possible. I shall nevertheless mark as strongly as my limits will permit me the most prominent features of their respective works; and, though I cannot dwell particularly on all the circumstances that attended their success, I shall endeavour to place every author in as conspicuous a situation as his public reception entitled him to.

CHARLES JOHNSON, who, as we are told, was famous for writing a play every year, and being at BUTTON'S every day, must, according to this calculation, have been before the public nineteen years; for he produced that number of dramatic pieces; the fact is, however, that he took one and thirty years to accomplish that task. His first piece, The

*Gentleman Cully*, came out in 1702. It is only attributed to JOHNSON by COXETER, but it is no matter who was the author of it, for it has very little merit.

*Fortune in her Wits*, 1705. This is a bad translation of COWLEY's *Naufragium Jocularis*. It was not performed. *Love and Liberty*, a tragedy, was intended for Drury Lane theatre. It is dedicated to the judicious critics throughout the town, who had, however, no proper opportunity of judging of its merits for it was never performed. The *Force of Friendship* was a tragedy, and the first play poor JOHNSON could get on the stage. It however might as well have been kept off, for it was completely damned as well as an after piece, called *Love in a Chest* which accompanied it; so that, as far as we have gone, JOHNSON'S labour was labour in vain.

JOHNSON, having hitherto found very few dramatic materials in himself, thought it would be a wiser way to have recourse to others. His next play called *The Wife's Relief*, is borrowed from SHIRLEY'S *Gamester*, and had success. Its principal merits, however, we have gone over in the account of SHIRLEY. It was produced in 1712, The Suc-



*successful Pirate*, 1713. JOHNSON next paid a visit to CARLELL, from whom he stole the best materials he could in *Arviragus and Philicia*; but the original was bad, and the copy worse. The *Generous Husband* was borrowed from nobody, and therefore had no success. The *Victim*, 1714. JOHNSON is charged with having borrowed this play from BOYER's *Achilles*, and RACINE's *Iphigenie*. It was time misapplied however, and so the public thought.

The *Country Lasses* was a more fortunate business; for, in order to make assurance double sure, it is as I formerly noticed taken from three plays, which had been in part taken from others. It has been at times revived with success, and KENRICK fashioned it into an opera which was performed at Covent Garden theatre. Upon this occasion the musician, whose name appeared in the bills as the composer, was determined to convince the public that he understood thieving as well as the original author of the piece.

The *Cobler of Preston*, which is taken from SHAKESPEAR, was thought so well of before it made its appearance that BULLOCK, the actor wrote a piece upon the same subject which was begun and finished in four and twenty hours, in order to get the

start of the other; but if they had been both burnt before they had made their appearance it would have been no great matter. The *Sultaneſs* is a translation of RACINE's *Bazajet*, which is his worst play, and we find it here less considerable than the original. It was performed in 1717, and some how or other procured JOHNSON a corner in the *Dunciad*.

The *Masquerade* was an insignificant thing, entirely invented by JOHNSON. *Love in a Forest* is neither more nor less than SHAKESPEAR's *As You Like It*, most barbarously mangled and disfigured. It would insult the reader to notice its success. The *Female Fortune Teller*. This play is only attributed to JOHNSON. It is not very material, however, for it has not merit enough to help even his fame. The *Village Opera* is very poorly written, and had but indifferent success. It furnished the hint, however, of *Love in a Village*, which is made up of this play, The *Gentleman Dancing Master*, *Le Jeu de L'amour et du Hazard* of MARIVAUX, and two or three other things.

With The *Epheſian Matron*, a farce of one act, *Medea*, a tragedy, only attributed to him, and bad enough to have belonged to a worse author, and *Cælia, or the Perjured Lover*, we finish the plays of



CHARLES JOHNSON. The last of these he calls a play, and the epilogue was written by FIELDING ; but he seems to have profited so little by his long experience that he left off as much flighted as he began.

Of HUGHES, whom it has been the fashion to praise as a man and condemn as a poet, the world have seen nothing dramatic but *The Siege of Damascus* except some trifling and some unfinished pieces. In that tragedy, however, there is enough of the poet and enough of the dramatist to shew that, had he thought proper to bend his talents more towards the stage, he would have stood very high as a theatrical writer. ADDISON had such an opinion of him that he entreated him, out of despair, as he said, of his own powers, to write a fifth act to *Cato* ; but the jealousy of the Dramatic Tartuffe made him soon repent of his request, and before HUGHES had finished it he took care to write one himself.

HUGHES, as well as a poet, was a musician, and a painter, and of no mean description ; but he seems to have possessed the two last accomplishments more as an amateur than a master. His taste for music induced him to write cantatas and ballads ; which, though hasty, are many of them very creditable.

STEELE speaks of him in those three capacities very warmly, and, had not his zeal to check the Italian opera, the abuses of which spectacle has always been abused and always will prevail, pervaded his musical pieces, his time would not have been so ill employed.

Besides the *Siege of Damascus*, of which the coolest of his admirers, for he had no enemies, speaks of in terms of commendation, he wrote *The Misanthrope*, a mere translation, and never performed, and *Calypso and Telemachus*, an opera, performed in 1712. The music was composed by GALLIARD, and it seems intended to shew what ought to be considered as rational in an opera, a part of that species of dramatic amusement, even if it could be admitted, that would never be admired.

*Apollo and Daphne* was a masque. This was written with the same laudable view but to no better purpose, *Cupid and Hymen* was a masque of the same description; which, with the first act of the *Miser* from MOLIERE, and one scene only, from the *Orestes* of Euripides, make up the small catalogue of this author's dramatic works.

THOMSON, the celebrated author of the *Seasons*, poems full of extraordinary merit, and extraordinary



singularity, to which latter quality they most owed their success\*, whose poetry has eminent beauties and gross faults; but who had such an original genius that the want of his name would make a ma-

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\* As the *Seasons* have been as much read and as much criticised as any thing in the English language, men of uncommon information have generally handled it with the greatest severity, which is a proof that its faults are such as ought not to be pardoned to a man of brilliant genius. HERNE, the critic, whose observations, though critical and accurate, have seldom any acrimony, speaks of THOMSON in one of his chapters on literature, where he treats of that figure in speech which he calls utter absurdity. I shall transcribe the passage.

“ JAMES THOMSON in his poem called *Spring*, among his *Seasons*, has with great tenderness of heart pleaded, as from his very bowels, against the inhuman practice of killing oxen to make beef stakes; and almost told us he would rather want his stake than have any such doings. Nay, what is still more tender, he advises us not to torment poor worms, by putting them upon the hook alive.—Upon the hook! For what purpose? Why to catch fish to be sure; which he proceeds to give us cool directions for, as a fine diversion.

“ Strait as above the surface of the flood  
 “ They wanton rise, or, urg’d by hunger, leap,  
 “ Then fix with gentle twitch the barbed hook;  
 “ Some lightly tossing to the grassy bank,  
 “ And to the shelving shore slow dragging some.

“ O JAMIE, JAMIE! had you no bowels for fish? The poor man forgot that fish had feelings I suppose, because he was fond of catching and eating them; whereas killing of oxen was quite out of his way.”

terial chasm in English literature, was the author of six dramatic pieces.

The first play of THOMSON was *Sophonisba*; a subject we have seen repeatedly treated. It came out in 1730. At the time he was writing it, he had published *Winter*, which was written into fame, though it had merit, before it was known whether it possessed any at all. The public expectation, therefore, was a tip toe for this his first dramatic production, and the rehearsals were crowded by an assemblage of all that was fashionable about town. This anticipation of its public reception, however, only foretold that its real effect would not be reputable. It was considered as a dull moral performance, and one single line gave a ludicrous opportunity to turn it into a jest; a symptom generally fatal to tragedy.

This line was parodied in FIELDING'S *Tom Thumb*. In THOMSON'S play it was,

Oh, Sophonisba, Sophonisba, oh!

In FIELDING'S farce it was,

Oh, Huncamunca, Huncamunca, oh!

and the town, by way of making it more ludicrous, added

Oh, Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson, oh!



If every tragedy were to be laid aside for a nonsensical line, I am afraid there would be but little employ for MELPOMENE.

*Agamemnon*, a tragedy, was performed in 1738, and had every assistance from THOMSON's friends, and among the rest, POPE, affecting to patronize it, placed himself very forward in the theatre during its representation. The good people of ENGLAND, however, like to feel for themselves, and could not be taught to find any merit in it.

*Edward and Eleonora* was prepared for the stage, but interdicted by the Lord Chamberlain, some say by the connivance of the author, who feared its public fate; but this is a very improbable story. The history of the play is well known, or rather well believed. It is the circumstance of ELEONORA, queen to EDWARD the first, who is said to have cured her husband by sucking the venom from a wound he received from a poisoned arrow.

The *Masque of Alfred*, written in conjunction with MALLET, so beautifully composed by ARNE, and of which every body knows the success, is the last of THOMSON's dramatic performances before

GARRICK, who performed in *Tancred and Sigismunda* his next play, which circumstance of course lent that consequence to the piece that has been the means of keeping up the reputation it acquired.

THEOBALD—whose edition of SHAKESPEAR'S works was preferred to the editions of POPE, WARBURTON, and HANMER, and with reason; because, however he might have been "a heavy minded man," it had that sort of merit for which ADDISON preferred TICKLER'S *Homer* to POPE'S, that is to say, more of SHAKESPEAR in it, and indeed more honest inclination to do justice to the subject it treated—has very little else to be remembered by. He wrote eighteen dramatic pieces of one description or other which I shall now describe. I am sorry to say that justice will not let me speak their eulogium.

*Electra*, 1714, was a mere translation from SOPHOCLES. The *Persian Princess*, 1715, was written, according to the author's account, before he was nineteen. This is one reason, perhaps, that it is so full of puerility. The *Perfidious Brother*, 1715, is the *Orphan* spoilt. Another man, a watch maker of the name of MESTAYER, says that THEOBALD stole this play from one written by him on the same subject. *Oedipus, King of Thebes*, is a translation from



SOPHOCLES, with critical notes, and a heavy business it is. *Plutus*, and *The Clouds*, are of course from ARISTOPHANES. None of these Greek tragedies and comedies were intended for the stage.

*Pan and Syrinx* was an opera set to music by GALLIARD, who was a sprightly composer with considerable genius. This piece had some success. In the *Lady's Triumph*, a piece written by SETTLE, THEOBALD introduced some episodic parts which were set to music. *Richard the Second*, altered from SHAKESPEAR, had success. Lord ORRERY made THEOBALD a present upon this occasion of a hundred pounds enclosed in a snuff box worth twenty. The *Rape of Proserpine*, *Apollo and Daphne*, and *Harlequin Sorcerer*, were the next productions of this author. These pantomimes are well known, though they do more credit to the mechanist and musician than the author; some of the music of the *Sorcerer*, was composed, and in a very fine style, by Dr. ARNE, the rest and all that remains of the original is by GALLIARD.

The *Double Falsehood*, 1727, THEOBALD endeavoured to palm on the world for a production of SHAKESPEAR, probably because he wished the brat to have a good father. Dr. FARMER says it was

by SHIRLEY, and Mr. MALONE gives it to MAS-SINGER. It is generally however believed to be THEOBALD'S, and thus these reports compose a triple falsehood. The proverb of too many cooks spoil the broth was here reversed, for the play had very good success. *Orestes*, 1731. Why this piece is called an opera it is difficult to say; perhaps because the subject is romantic, and it is interspersed with a little music. It is a strange thing and the public were of that opinion. The *Fatal Secret* was known to every body before it came out, for it is stolen from WEBSTER'S *Duchess of Malfy*. *Orpheus and Euridice* is the famous pantomime under that title. The *Happy Captive* is the last of THEOBALD'S pieces and intended to ridicule the Italian opera. It is however so ridiculous itself that it recoiled and wounded its author.

SAVAGE, whose strange turbulent life has been so laboriously written by Dr. JOHNSON, had however very little either in that or his writings to command public applause. If he had an unnatural mother, he was himself unnatural and ungrateful towards all his brothers and sisters of creation, for he never enjoyed the bounty or friendship of any individual whom he did not offend and incense, which is so well known by those who have read the long ca-



talogue of his strange vicissitudes that it is unnecessary if it were not impossible to go into it here.

SAVAGE's dramatic works are *Love in a Veil*, a comedy, and *Sir Thomas Overbury*, a tragedy. The first, though brought out under the advantage of the kindest attention from WILKS and STEELE, which he returned as usual with ingratitude, had no success; the other was sparingly praised. It yielded altogether from the theatre and the press some say two hundred pounds, some only one.

LILLO, the celebrated author of *George Barnwell*, was an original English writer of great merit. It is impossible to deny that domestic subjects are best treated in natural and unaffected language, and derive most pathos and interest from forcible prose than measured blank verse. The heart knows nothing of heroics; it cannot feign; it cannot be depressed, shocked, or torne, raised, interested, or delighted, so well by any language as that which utters ideas expressive of naked and instant conception. All sublimity is simple; and, if no author has hit it oftner than SHAKESPEAR, it is because his verse has all the force and fidelity of prose.

LILLO's first piece was *Silvia, or the Country*

*Burial.* It was an opera, and was performed in 1731, at which time nothing of this description could possibly succeed owing to the great reputation of the *Beggar's Opera*. It must be confessed that its own fair pretensions to public favour were very slender,

*George Barnwell* is so well known that it is difficult to make any addition to what has been already said of it. Dr. JOHNSON has declared that "he scarcely thinks a tragedy in prose dramatic; that it is difficult for performers to speak it; that the lowest when impassioned raise their language," I think he had better have said their voices, for as to their language I believe upon such occasions it is lowered even to blackguardism, "and that the writing of prose is generally the plea or excuse of poverty of genius."

LILLO has very plainly given the lie to all this in *George Barnwell*, a play that would have lost all its pathos had it been in blank verse; and this fact is so strongly proved that, if it had not boasted sterling and valuable merit to a most uncommon degree, it must have sunk under the weight of that calumny which was intended to crush it; but says an author those auditors who brought with them the



old ballad, from which the play was taken, with a view to ridicule and decry it, were at length obliged to drop their ballads and pull out their handkerchiefs.

The *Christian Hero* is taken from SCANDERBEG and is by no means a proper subject either for the stage or for LILLO. *Fatal Curiosity* is however proper for both, for it is certainly very interesting and admirably well treated. There is a mixture of horror and tenderness in it which in a very uncommon degree penetrate the heart. The story, though the circumstance really happened, is extremely novel, and the moral is grand and commanding. There seems nothing against its success, were it to be revived, but its length, for it is in three acts, and even a good author would tremble at an attempt to extend it to five. *Marina*, a play of three acts, is taken from PERICLES. *Britannia* is a masque written on the marriage of the Princess of ORANGE and the Princess Royal.

*Elmeric* was a posthumous work of LILLO. It did no particular credit to his reputation. *Arden of Feverisham* was left in an imperfect state, but it was finished by Dr. HOADLY, and brought out with success in 1759. This play is written upon the

old story from which a tragedy had before been made. It was falsely imputed to SHAKESPEAR, and introduced by the following title. *The lamentable and true tragedie of M. Arden of Feversham, in Kent, who was most wickedly murdered by the means of his disloyall and wanton wyfe ; who, for the love she bare for one Mosbie, hyred two desperate ruffins, Blackwill and Shagbag, to kill him.*

CHARLES SHADWELL, nephew, or as some say son, to the laureat whom DRYDEN has immortalized by his *Mac Flecknoe*, enjoyed some public post in IRELAND, [and wrote seven dramatic productions, all which, except one, *The Fair Quaker of Deal*, an account of which and Miss SANTLOW's celebrity we have seen, were performed on the Irish stage. They were called *The Humours of the Army*, *The Hasty Wedding*, *Sham Prince*, *Rotheric O'Connor*, *Plotting Lovers*, and *Irish Hospitality*. In all these pieces SHADWELL has studied DANCOURT, taking up such slight flimzy circumstances as might form temporary exhibitions. *The Humours of the Army* is exactly *Les Curieux de Compeigne*.

TAVERNER was a name a good deal distinguished in various branches of the arts. The present object of our notice practised the civil law in Doctor's



Commons, and painted and wrote plays for his amusement, and certainly in no mean degree for the amusement of the public. He, however, painted better than he wrote. The titles of his plays are *The Faithful Bride of Grenada*, *The Maid the Mistress*, *The Female Advocates*, *The Artful Husband*, *The Artful Wife*, and *'Tis Well if it Takes*.

SWINEY, whose history has been already pretty well traced, wrote *The Quacks*, *Camilla*, and *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*. The first is a poor farce and the others were done in quality of Operatical Manager. WARD was a whimsical fellow of strong natural parts; who, finding that he could breathe no atmosphere but that of an alehouse, resolved to keep one himself. He was by no means a bad writer, and was distinguished by a mock heroic poem in the style of *Hudibras*, called *The Reformation*. His dramatic pieces are *Honesty in Distress*, *The Humours of a Coffee House*, and *The Prisoner's Opera*. There was another WARD who wrote *The Happy Lovers*, *The Petticoat Plotter*, and *The Widow's Wish*.

PHILIPS, who was one of the satelites that moved about ADDISON, and whose *Sappho* is thought by some to be worth all the rest of his works, his pasto-

als and his tragedy included, even though he is supposed to be greatly indebted to his friends for their assistance in it, and whose *Namby Pamby* is said by a great man to have delighted all ranks, from a WALPOLE, the steerer of the helm, to Miss PULTENEY in her nursery, wrote for the stage *The Distressed Mother*, *The Briton*, and *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*.

*The Distressed Mother* is completely from the *Andromaque* of RACINE. It was puffed into reputation by ADDISON and all his friends, and certainly has a degree of merit. The perpetual see-saw however of interest being divided between four characters, who relieve one another like centinels, or buckets in a well, is intolerably tedious. I once saw it acted by four performers, each of whom had a different lisp. *The Briton* was brought out in 1721. It was well received, but has been ever since neglected. *Humphrey*, as good a designation of a Briton as the other, was not so well received.

OZEL was little more than an industrious translator. His pieces are principally translations from MOLIERE, whose whole works he has given the public, CORNEILLE, RACINE, and others; and, as he thus occupied himself for amusement rather than emolument, being employed in business very



lucratively and respectably, his pieces were little adapted for the stage.

CAREY, the well known writer of several farces which occasionally are now revived with pleasure, was by profession a musician. He had some genius but little taste. There is scarcely any thing of his however but has something like merit, though not actually the thing itself. Sir JOHN HAWKINS has impartially and rather generously described his character. "As a musician," says he, "CAREY seems to have been the first of the lowest rank; and as a poet the last of that class of which DUFFEY was the first, with this difference, that in all the songs written on love, wine, and such kind of subjects, he seems to have manifested an inviolable regard for decency and good manners." The author before me finishes an account of his history with these words. "He led a life free from reproach and hanged himself October 4th, 1743."

*Hanging and Marriage* was never acted. The *Contrivances* has been acted and very frequently with considerable success. Every body knows that *Arethusa* used to be the probationary part of female singers before they were bold enough to venture upon characters of more consequence, a mode of

conduct which would be more serviceable to the stage than beginning as is usual now, with stepping on the top round of the ladder, a circumstance that precludes ascension and may produce a fall. *Amelia* after the Italian manner, and produced at the French theatre had no great merit. Here we begin to see the extent of CAREY's musical abilities; for, whenever the limits of the poetry exceeded mere trifles he was obliged to call in assistance, LAMPE, a man of considerable merit, composed this opera. *Taraminta* was a piece of the same description; the music was composed by SMITH. I very much suspect that CAREY could do little more than invent a melody and get some other person to transmit his ideas from his mind to paper, or at least the arrangement of it; not so bad but something like the lady composers of the present day, and indeed the gentlemen too in some cases.

*Chrononhotontologos* is a well known burlesque in which there are many passages that successfully ridicule inflated and bombastic writing. The idea of the warrior's piling himself upon dead bodies till he reached the gods, who invited him for his heroism to remain with them, which offer he rejected because he was summoned to earth by the eyes of his mistress, is very happy. The *Honest Yorkshireman* is a true



English farce and has much pleasantry. The parts of the music, which are not selected, came very properly within the reach of CAREY's musical genius.

The *Dragon of Wantley* has frequently given pleasure on the stage. It is much more the right sort of burlesque on Italian operas than the generality of pieces written upon that principle. The terror excited in the old ballad by the dragon and the superiority of MOORE, of Moorehall, to either Hercules or St. George, are admirable materials for the purpose, "for," says the ballad, speaking of Hercules and the Dragon of Lerna,

" He had a club  
" His dragon to drub,  
" Or he never had don't I warrant ye;  
" But MOORE of Moorehall,  
" With nothing at all,  
" Soon slew the Dragon of Wantley."

*Margery*, the sequel to the Dragon, is unfortunate, as indeed are sequels in general. *Betty, or the Country Bumpkin*, was not successful, but *Nancy, or the Parting Lovers*, is a happy trifle, and has always had success. The song of "And can't thou leave thy Nancy," shews that CAREY's mind was

musical. There is more genius in it than in many a laboured fugue.

BULLOCK, son to the celebrated actor of that name, was himself an actor and a dramatic writer; but he fell short of his father in one profession, and of his cotemporaries in the other. His pieces are as follows: *Woman's Revenge*, a comedy, 1715, is a filtration of BETTERTON'S *Match in Newgate*, which he had filtrated from MARSTON'S *Dutch Courtezan*; *The Slip* merits its name for it is no more than a cion from MIDDLETON'S *Mad World my Masters*. *Adventures of Half an Hour* was scarcely suffered by the audience half that time. The *Cobler of Preston* we have already seen an account of in the article, *Charles Johnson*.

The *Perjuror* is a very poor thing. It seems intended to reprobate the constant breach of official oaths, and to strike at trading justices, constables, and their understrappers; but such characters are too callous to be hurt by so tiny a club. BULLOCK seems to have acted the Hercules with a switch in his hand. *Woman's a Riddle* was claimed by SAVAGE and brought out by BULLOCK, but is nothing more than a translation of a Spanish play by a lady. The *Traytor*, 1718. If BULLOCK'S attempts in comedy



were so ineffectual, this single effort of tragedy must be of course ten times worse. This *Traytor*, which has been also attributed to SHIRLEY and to RIVERS, betrayed BULLOCK into the folly of confirming the town in their opinion that he had very poor pretensions as a dramatic writer.

THEOPHILUS CIBBER, whose variegated and complicate history was as scandalous, and would have been as noticeable, as that of SAVAGE, if he had been born with as much genius, who was forward in all manner of theatrical schisms, and got into all manner of scrapes, who has been considered by GOLDSMITH and others to have fortunately escaped hanging by being drowned, who, in short, was a constant imposition in every thing he said and did, all which is attributed by an author to his having been born on the day of the most memorable storm ever known in this kingdom, which happened November 26th, 1703, brought out, for we cannot say he wrote, six dramatic pieces \*.

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\* T. CIBBER was allowed by the world to claim some share of reputation from the work, published in five volumes, and called *Cibber's Lives of the Poets*, but JOHNSON upon indubitable authority, no less than having the original manuscript in his possession, insists that CIBBER had no hand in it whatever, for that it was the work of ROBERT SHIELS, a native of Scotland, to whom he pays some

*Henry the Sixth*, a miserable alteration of SHAKESPEAR'S play, was performed only in the summer and received very little applause, but yet more than it merited. The *Lover*, which play he dedicated to his wife, whose acting gave it the little celebrity it obtained, was a flimzy piece full of common place and puerility. *Patie and Peggy*, is ALLEN RAMSEY'S *Gentle Shepherd* reduced to one act. CIBBER boasts that he atchieved this mighty task in one day, which he might easily do, pen and ink being totally out of the question, and nothing more being necessary for the labour of this memorable playwright than paste and a pair of scissars. The *Harlot's Progress* was an obscene thing which was deservedly

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handsome compliments. There is one matter rather irreconcilable in this account, for JOHNSON says that this work was never seen by either of the CIBBERS, and yet he informs the reader that CIBBER betrayed the name of the author for ten guineas. This is a curious circumstance altogether. CIBBER published the work as his own; he must, therefore, not only have seen it but have purchased it of SHIELS, and a promise of secrecy along with it, which secrecy must have been kept by SHIELS inviolably till his death, which happened, as JOHNSON tells us, just after the work was published. How came JOHNSON to know this fact? Does he mean to say it was to him that CIBBER betrayed the secret for ten guineas? Or, what is more unlikely, did he know SHIELS and his hand writing? And by that means was able to ascertain that the manuscript in his possession was written by SHIELS? Really this bare assertion, contradicting itself so many ways, is very questionable.



hissed. *Romeo and Juliet*. If any thing could revolt the town, I think it must have been to see an attempt to improve SHAKESPEAR by THEOPHILUS CIBBER. The *Auction* was an interlude stolen from FIELDING's *Historical Register*.

COFFEY, an Irishman, who was possessed of an inexhaustable fund of that humour that distinguishes the low Irish, who had a knack of patching up old plays and farces, and who performed Æsop for his benefit merely because he was deformed, for he was an execrable actor, brought out *Southwark Fair*, a droll, taken from an old play, *The Beggar's Wedding*, made up from the *Jovial Crew* and other things, *Phæbe*, the same piece cut into a farce, *The Female Parson*, which was damned the first night, *The Devil to Pay, or the Wives Metamorphosed*, a well known and justly admired farce, not however written by COFFEY but metamorphosed by him, MOTTLEY, the two CIBBERS, and others, from SHADWELL's *Devil of a Wife*, *The Boarding School*, taken from a miserable play of DURFEY, *The Merry Cocker*, a sequel to the *Devil to Pay*, and damned the first night, and *The Devil upon two Sticks*, stolen from an indifferent play written by one GWINNET.

MOTTLEY derived more consideration from his  
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being a man of family, and some fortune, than by his dramatic efforts. The *Imperial Captives*, a tragedy, 1720, merely a passable production, was performed for a few nights with that negative sort of success which to an author of any spirit, is more than a positive damnation. *Antiochus* is founded on the strange improbable, or if probable the unnatural story of Seleucas Nicanor, who gave up his wife Stratonice to his son Antiochus, who was dying for love of her. That folly which is a satire on the passions instead of a compliment to them ought not to be made a subject of the drama. This would be a good theme for KOTZEBUE.

*Penelope*, 1728. This is a burlesque of HOMER'S *Odyssey*. MOTTLEY was assisted in it by COOKE. It was intended, or supposed to be so by POPE, as a satire upon his *Homer*, and therefore COOKE is crammed into the notes in the *Dunciad*. The *Craftsman* is only a poor satire on a newspaper under that title. *Widow Bewitched*. This was the best of MOTTLEY'S plays, and had the best success; but "the wicked compared with the more wicked seem lovely."

GRIFFIN was an author and an actor. He brought out *Injured Virtue*, a tragedy, 1715, merely altered from MASSINGER and DECKER. *Love in a*



*Sack*, a poor farce; *Humours of Purgatory*, taken from the comic part of SOUTHERN'S *Fatal Marriage*, *The Masquerade*, a thing that had temporary success, and *Whig and Tory*, which had no success at all.

The remainder of those authors before GARRICK, I shall take in a summary way. HUNT wrote *The Fall of Tarquin*, a most wretched piece, says my intelligence. JACOB was author of *The Poetical Register*, and produced *Love in a Wood*, a farce never performed, and *The Soldier's Last Stake*. This he informs his readers was ready for the stage which of course was not ready to receive it, for it never made its appearance. Sir HILDBRAND JACOB, who wrote poems and other publications, produced *The Fatal Constancy*, a tragedy, 1723, performed with applause enough to encourage its author to go on, just as we are tempted to play after winning the first stakes. *The Nest of Plays* was three comedies in one. It was damned the first night, some say because it had no merit, and others because it was the first play brought out after the Licensing Act; the last reason seems nonsense.

Mrs HAYWOOD, a most whimsical writer, who seemed determined to prove that women cannot not only talk faster but write faster than men, whose novels, essays, and other productions of a similar

kind, take up nineteen volumes, who took Mrs. MANLEY for her model, whose indecency so offended POPE that he clapt her up in the *Dunciad*, and who is defended by her biographer because, though she wrote indecently at first, she wrote delicately afterwards, from which this charitable advocate supposes that she was gallant in the early part of her life and afterwards reformed—wrote four dramatic pieces, *Fair Captive*, *Wife to Let*, *Frederick Duke of Brunswick*, and *Opera of Operas*, which the same gentleman confesses were but indifferent. The first was not written by her but by Captain HURST, the second did not succeed, though the lady attempted the principal part, the third was damned, and the fourth was FIELDING's *Tom Thumb* set to music.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, not the lexicographer, but the author of *Hurlothrumbo*, got some reputation by affecting singularity; a trick that has too often imposed upon the public. He wrote also *Cheeshire Comics*, *The Blazing Comet*, and *All alive and Merry*. These pieces were all represented at the Haymarket. The rage for *Hurlothrumbo* was a disgrace to the public, for the audience were fairly laughed at all through the piece.

The author honestly tells them that they will find



it full of madness and extravagance, fine thoughts, and unintelligible fustian and fiction; and thus goes on in a mixed style between the *Euphuism* of LYLLEY, and the *Visions* of RABELAIS, performing the principal character himself, and confessing that it is impossible for them to understand him, owing to their not tasting the different sentiments as he did when he composed the piece, by sometimes playing on a fiddle, and sometimes walking in stilts.

How such incomprehensible stupidity could have been followed with the insatiable avidity it was, challenges astonishment. The fact however is indubitable. All the world flocked to hear this rhapsodical nonsense. A set of smarts formed themselves into what they called the Hurllothrumbo Society, nay, it is said that SIR ROBERT WALPOLE encouraged this infatuation to amuse the people while some state secrets were getting properly ripe for discovery.

ESTCOURT, of whom I have already spoken of as an actor, brought out *The Fair Example*, a comedy, and *Prunella*, an interlude; neither of which claim much rank as dramatic pieces. SMITH wrote *Phædra and Hyppolitus*, 1707. This play was performed but three nights, which doctor JOHNSON accounts for by saying that it pleased the critics and the critics only; 'tis true that ADDISON says the

neglect of it was disgraceful to the nation; but ADDISON always lavished praises on those writers from whose abilities he had nothing to fear.

FYFE, an obscure author, wrote *The Royal Martyr, King Charles the First*. Governor HUNTER, who took two thousand Palatines to settle at NEW YORK, and who was at different times governor of NEW YORK, VIRGINIA, the JERSEYS, and JAMAICA, wrote a thing distinguished as a biographical farce, called *Androborus*. Lord BLESSINGTON wrote a contemptible farce called *The Lost Princess*. CHARLES, Lord Orrery, was the author of an unsuccessful comedy, the prologue by Lord LANDSDOWN, called *As you find It*. Dr. KING, known by his siding with SACHEVERAL, by having a hand in the *Examiner*, by writing *The Art of Love* and *The Art of Cookery*, produced a tragi-comedy called *Joan of Headington*. GRIMES, who was a school-master, and famous for exciting insurrections among his boys, wrote a thing which he called an *Opera alluding to Peace*.

The famous Puppet Shew POWELL, rival of the Italian opera, produced a mock performance called *Venus and Adonis*. JACKSON translated *Ajax* from SOPHOCLES. BLANCH wrote three pieces, which



were however not performed; they were called *The Beau Merchant*, *Swords into Anchors*, and *Hoops into Spinning Wheels*. HAMILTON wrote two miserable things called *Doating Lovers*, and *The Petticoat Plotter*; the last of which, however, in consequence of the author's interest, who was related to the Duke of HAMILTON, procured him a handsome benefit at advanced prices.

MOLLOY, who was a staunch advocate for government, and therefore, says my author, was neglected by ministry, wrote *The Perplexed Couple*, *The Coquette*, and *The Half Pay Officers*, neither of which met with any great success says the same author, although in one of them an old woman of eighty-five, called PEG FRYER, played a part and danced a jig. Three pieces called *The Earl of Mar marred*, *The Pretender's Flight*, and *The Inquisition*, are attributed to an author of the name of JOHN PHILIPS, though very uncertain accounts are given of either this author, or these plays. KNIPE wrote a farce called *The City Ramble*.

BRERETON, a major in the army, in two pieces he produced, imitated RACINE'S *Esther*, and CORNEILLE'S *Polieucte*. BOOTH, the actor, wrote an opera called *The Death of Dido*, which was com-

posed by PEPUSCHE. Mrs. DAVYS, an Irishwoman, and the keeper of a coffee house, wrote *The Northern Heiress*, and *The Self Rival*; one only of these pieces was performed and that had but very indifferent success. LEVERIDGE, the singer, wrote *Pyramus and Thisbe*. BREVAL wrote *The Confederates*, and the *Play is the Plot*, from which pieces were taken, *The Strollers*, and the *Rape of Helen*. *The Confederates* is a satire on *Three Hours after Marriage*, which BREVAL published under the assumed name of JOSEPH GAY. This was provocation enough for POPE; who, instantly introduced BREVAL into the *Dunciad*. WEAVER was a dancing master, and a dramatic poet, a coalition of extremities in talents rather rare; the head and the heels seldom having any thing to do with each other in the way of genius. These pieces are a sort of pantomimes and are called *Mars and Venus*, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, *Persius and Andromeda*, and *The Judgment of Paris*.

BECKINGHAM, who was represented as a soldier and nothing more, wrote *Scipio Africanus*, and *Henry the Fourth of France*; two pieces correctly regular and therefore insufferably dull. BROWN produced a stupid farce called *The Two Harlequins*, from the French of LE NOBLE. SIR THOMAS MOORE



brought out a tragedy full of the absurdities of *Hurlothrumbo* without its genius, called *Manjora*. It is impossible to avoid selecting the following passages by way of giving an idea of the bombast that ignorant authors fancy they may foist upon the town with impunity. In one part of the play, the King says,

By all the ancient gods of Rome and Greeee,  
I love my daughter better than my niece;  
If any one should ask the reason why,  
I'll tell 'em nature makes the strongest tie.

In another,

Call up my guards, call 'em up every one,  
If you don't call all, you may as well call none.

Dr. SMITH. Of this gentleman a circumstance is related which does the highest honour to the feelings and friendship of WILKS the actor. SMITH was designed for the church; but finding it impossible to become an orator from an impediment in his speech, he was determined to turn his thoughts to some other profession; and, upon considering the matter every way, he at last thought phyfic the best choice he could possibly make. To furnish himself with the means of prosecuting his studies, he wrote a play, called *The Captive Princess*. It was refused by the actors; but WILKS, entering into the spirit

of SMITH's intention, and greatly approving the good sense of his plan, offered him a benefit for it, which he rendered so profitable, that it enabled his friend to enter himself at LEYDEN, where he applied to the study of phyfic so diligently that doctor BOERHAAVE recommended him to the Czarina, who made him one of the physicians of the Russian court. \*

TOLSON, who was a clergyman, and by his irregularities begat a suspicion that he had murdered a child, the consequence of an illicit amour with a young lady of distinction, and who afterwards became chaplain to the earl of SUSSEX, and was protected by lady LONGUEVILLE, produced *The Earl of Warrick*, T. KILLIGREW, of the old stock of his name. who was gentleman of the bed chamber to GEORGE the second when he was prince of

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\* WILKS received a letter from SMITH after he was established in RUSSIA, in which he speaks of his situation, and gives him advice of furs and other presents which he had sent him. To shew how much he was obliged to WILKS, and how gratefully he felt towards him I shall quote the latter part of his letter—"But who gave me these furs? This affluence? This royal mistress? this happy situation? A man just of your age and stature. If you can't find him out, ask my dear and worthy friend Sir Harry Wildair, and tell him at the same time the grain was his; and the reaper, with the crop, shall ever be at his command."



WALEs, wrote a trifle called *Chit Chat*. CROXALL, of whom there is nothing remarkable but his being a staunch whig, wrote a dramatic performance, which is however nothing more than a version of SOLOMON'S Song, called *The Fair Circassian*.

CHETWOOD, who was many years prompter of Drury Lane, and to whose anecdotes relative to theatres and actors all those who have written on the subject of the Stage have been materially indebted, wrote *The Stock Jobbers*, intended as well as another farce of this author, to expose the South Sea mania. *The Lover's Opera*, a piece which had but little success, and *The Generous Free Mason*, a trifle only intended for Bartholomew Fair. LEIGH, an inferior actor, wrote *Kensington Gardens*, and *Hob's Wedding*, to shew one would think that he was an indifferent writer as he was an actor; the latter was a continuation of DOCKET'S *Country Wake*.

ODELL, who had been patronized by lord WARTON, and who lost first an estate in the court interest, but afterwards obtained a pension, erected a theatre in Goodman's Field's, as we have already seen, and afterwards ceded his interest to GIFFARD. He is thought however to have made the theatre afterwards assist his fortune; for, soon after the busi-

ness of *The Golden Rump*, and the accomplishment of the Licencing Act, he was made Deputy Master of the Revels under the duke of GRAFTON, which place he held to his death. He produced for the stage, *Chimera*, a temporary thing on the South Sea bubble, *The Patron*, performed with very little success, *The Smugglers*, a farce better received, and *The Prodigal*, a comedy which is little more than an alteration of SHADWELL'S *Woman Captain*

MITCHEL, called sir ROBERT WALPOLE'S poet, and who was famous, like SAVAGE, for companionable qualities and dissipation, wrote only a piece, of some merit, called *The Highland Fair*, for *The Fatal Extravagance*, which is attributed to him, was written by AARON HILL to do him a pecuniary kindness. CONCANEN, who was attorney general of JAMAICA, and wrote some poems, produced a thing in imitation of *Tunbridge Wells and Epsom Wells*. It was called *Wexford Wells*. Two BILLAMY'S husband and son to a lady who kept a boarding school at Chelsea, wrote between them eight pieces merely for the scholars. They are principally translations from GUARINI and others. STURMY, who is but little known, wrote *Love and Duty*, *The Compromise*, and *Sesostris*. These pieces are said to be ill written but they afforded some hints to other



writers. *Sefostris* in particular is supposed to have furnished VOLTAIRE with materials for his *Merope*, which is possible; though, as GILBERT in 1643, CHAPELLE in 1683, and LE GRANGE in 1691, had treated this subject; it is more likely not only that VOLTAIRE borrowed from his own countrymen, but that STURMY resorted to the same source.

DUNCOMBE translated RACINE's *Athaliah*, and wrote *Junius Brutus*. He is only known by being related by marriage to HUGHES. STERLING was one of the associates of MITCHELL; but he reformed, and took orders. He wrote the *Rival Generals*, and the *Parricide*, neither of which are particularly noticed by any writer. PITCAIRNE, intended for the church, and afterwards eminent as a physician, wrote a comedy called *The Assembly*, as we are told; but, as the invidious and unhandsome abuse, of which this piece is full, does not by any means characterize the mind or talents of this great man, the authenticity of his being the author of it is very questionable.

FENTON who experienced various fortune, who translated several books of HOMER's *Odyssy* published by POPE, and was requited by a small gratuity and a stolen epitaph, wrote a tragedy upon the

well known subject of *Mariamne*. It came out in 1723, and was the means of raising the reputation of the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. SOUTHERN is said to have assisted FENTON. CIBBER had no opinion of the play which fact, has been told to his prejudice. The town and CIBBER certainly did not think alike for FENTON got a thousand pounds for his trouble.

The celebrated ALLAN RAMSAY, besides *The Gentle Shepherd*, which has at various times been performed with much reputation, brought out a complimentary piece called *The Nuptials*. ROBE produced *The Fatal Legacy*. WILLIAMS brought out a local performance called *Richmond Wells*. HOWLING promised to produce four pieces of which we are furnished with the titles, but I fancy nobody ever saw the plays themselves. LOVET, one of MITCHELL's intimates, wrote *The Bastard*. THURMOND was the son of the actor of that name, and produced five pantomimic operas called *Harlequin Shepherd*, *Apollo and Daphne*, *Harlequin Dr. Faustus*, another *Apollo and Daphne*, and *Harlequin's Triumph*, none of these have any relation to THEOBALD's pantomimes. SANDFORD wrote *The Female Fop*.

COOKE at nineteen gave the world an edition of



*Andrew Marvel*, and afterwards other productions, through which he stands upon good ground as a scholar. This reputation he has however thrown down by his dramatic writings which are *Albion*, *Battle of the Poets*, *The Triumph of Love and Honour*, *The Eunuch*, from TERENCE of course, *The Mournful Nuptials*, *Love the Cause and the Cure of Grief*, and *Amphytrion* from PLAUTUS. H. JOHNSON translated *Romulus* from De la MOTTE. JEFFREYS wrote three pieces published together called *Edwin*, *Merope*, and *The Triumph of Truth*; the last is an oratorio.

DR. SHERIDAN, the intimate and merry friend of DR. SWIFT, of whom my lord CORKE says "This ill starred, good natured, improvident man" returned to Dublin, unhinged from all favour at court, and even banished from the castle. But "still he remained a punster, a fidler, and a wit," wrote, or rather translated, *Philoctetes*. HURST wrote the *Roman Maid*. ODINGSELLS became a lunatic, wrote three plays, and hanged himself. The coroner's jury might have returned their verdict of lunacy upon the strength of examining the plays. CAMPBELL is said to have been the author of a play called *The Rover Reclaimed*. WEST, lord chancellor of IRELAND, produced *Hecuba*. He

complains it was not heard out. It was merely a translation from EURIPIDES.

LEWIS wrote a miserable play called *Philip of Macedon*. It was dedicated to POPE; and according to the dedicator, "read and approved in all its parts" "by his discerning and consummate judgment." As it is a vile performance let us hope that POPE read only the dedication. SMYTHE, who was really a man of merit, was unable however to infuse any of it into his only dramatic piece. It was called *The Rival Modes*. Great expectations were however formed of it; and, while the town was on tip-toe for its appearances a play with much more merit, called *The Dissembled Wanton*, written by WELSTEAD, was produced, which was undeservedly neglected. HARRISON, an obscure writer, produced a play called *Belteshazzar*.

FROWDE, who was one of ADDISON's satellites, wrote *The Fall of Saguntum*, and *Philotas*, both tragedies, which however had no success, though they were strongly supported both privately and publicly, ASHTON wrote an indifferent play called *The Battle of Aughrim*. WALKER, the original Macheath, wrote *The Quaker's Opera*, and *The Fate of Villany*. BARFORD produced an unsuccessful piece called



The *Maiden Queen*. Dr. MADDEN wrote *Themistocles*; it had success. ADAMS translated seven plays from SOPHOCLES, and also wrote *The Death of Socrates*. RYAN, the actor, wrote *The Cobbler's Opera*. LANGFORD, the auctioneer and successor to the celebrated Mr. Cock, though very expert at a hammer was very clumsy at a pen; for charmed by his own eloquence, and fancying it would succeed if transmitted from the pulpit to the stage, he produced two pieces called *The Judgment of Paris*, and *The Lover his own Rival*, which were just put up and knocked down again.

GATAKER produced *The Jealous Clown*, WETHERBY wrote *Paul the Spanish Sharper*. MILLER wrote *The Humours of Oxford*, *The Mother in Law*, *The Man of Taste*, *Universal Passion*, *The Coffee House*, *Art and Nature*, *An Hospital for Fools*, *Mahomet*, *The Picture*, *Joseph and his Brethren*, and *Sir Roger De Coverley*; all which, except the first, are taken from other writers. MARTYN, nephew to professor MARTYN of Gresham College, wrote *Timolean*. EDWARD PHILLIPS, an author but little known, wrote *The Chambermaid*, a squeeze from CHARLES JOHNSON'S *Village Opera*, stolen, as we have already seen, itself; *The Mock Lawyer*, which

had temporary success, *Livery Rake and Country Lass*, successful also in some small degree; *Royal Chace*, the music by GALLIARD; and *Britons Strike Home*, which failed. WANDESFORD, in the style of a gentleman for his amusement, for he amused nobody else, produced a play called *Fatal Love*.

HATCHET, who was an actor, wrote two indifferent pieces called *The Rival Father*, and *The Chinese Orphan*. RALPH, from an obscure origin, rendered himself celebrated by his merit and perseverance. His dramatic pieces are not the best of his writings. His *History of England* is much esteemed, and so are his political pamphlets. One of his productions dared to point at POPE and his friends, and he was most illiberally, and in a strain of malignant falsity, put into the *Dunciad*. His plays are *The Fashionable Lady*, one of the mass of operas that generated from the *Beggar's Opera*, *The Fall of the Earl of Essex*, altered from BANKS, *The Astrologer*, altered from *Albumazor*. This play was performed but one night, and then to twenty one pounds, and revived afterwards with a prologue written by GARRICK, and yet the audience were dismissed. *The Lawyer's Feast* was a mere trifle. It however had some success. TRACY wrote *Periander*, of which we only know that it was privately praised and publicly con-



demned. The private applause can be accounted for. The author read his tragedy to his friends and on the same evening gave them an elegant supper, when it was universally agreed that, if the play was relished as well as the supper it would do.

DRAPER wrote *The Spendthrift*. There is no trace of the author or his piece, except this positive assertion. Of GORDON, who wrote a piece called *Lupone*, the accounts are just as clear. The Duke of WARTON began a play on the subject of *Mary Queen of Scots*. HIPPESEY, the father of Mrs. GREEN, and the tutor of SHUTER, wrote a piece called *A Journey to Bristol*. It was merely local. RANDALL wrote *The Disappointment*, which disappointed both the author and the public. BELLERS wrote a play called *Injured Innocence*. BODENS, a sprightly man of fashion, wrote a comedy called *The Modish Couple*, which had little success at first, and less when it was cut down to a farce and performed for Mrs. YATES's benefit in 1760.

KELLY was a member of the Middle Temple Society, and rendered himself conspicuous by the concern he had in a periodical work called *The Universal Spectator*. His dramatic pieces are *The Married Philosopher*, taken of course from DES-

TOUCHES, *Timon in Love*, from D'LISLE, a poor translation of a poor play, *The Fall of Bob*, a low farce, *The Levee*, refused a licence, and *Pill and Drop*, which was never offered to either licencer or manager. DRURY, an attorney, wrote a farcical ballad opera called *The Devil of a Duke*, *The Mad Captain*, *The Fancied Queen*, and *The Rival Milliners*, which last is a burlesque, a species of writing that cannot be attempted to effect but by men of merit, of which number DRURY unfortunately did not make one. LEDIARD wrote a masque called *Britannia*. DARCEY produced two pieces in IRELAND, they were called *Love and Ambition*, and *The Orphan of Venice*.

HUGGINS wrote an oratorio on the subject of *Judith*. HUMPHRIES wrote an opera called *Ulysses*. ASTON, *The Restoration of Charles the Second*, which was interdicted. NESBIT brought out at EDINBURGH, *Caledon's Tears*, a piece taken from *Chronicles and Records*. POTTER produced an opera called *Decoy*, which however was not attractive. BOND wrote *The Tuscan Treaty*, as we are told by some, but others say it was written by another gentleman, and only revised and brought forward by BOND\*

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\* It is more than probable that this is the very BOND of whom



FREEMAN produced a piece called *The Downfall of*

I have already related the anecdote concerning *Zara*. There is a confused account that it was actually AARON HILL's *Zara* which some persons performed at York Buildings a year before it made its appearance at Drury Lane, but it is easy to prove that this is impossible. *Zaire* was produced, in FRANCE, in 1732; the following year BOND, through some influence he had over the manager of Covent Garden theatre, brought out *The Tuscan Treaty*, written by a friend, which was not interesting and therefore did not succeed. In that very year BOND, in the French account, is stated to have been in FRANCE, and so delighted with *Zaire*, that he was determined to get a translation of it for the English Stage, which he was very competent to inspect, though he was no writer, for he had learnt the play by heart, and was such an enthusiast to it that it was continually his practice to repeat the most striking passages in the PARIS coffee houses. Upon his return, as we have seen before, he procured it to be translated, not by AARON HILL, but most likely the author of the *Tuscan Treaty*, and it is also very likely that the managers refused to accept it because it was the labour of a man who had produced an unsuccessful play. This was in 1734. HILL's play came out in 1735, who would hardly have sneaked into York Buildings to get at the opinion of a few individuals when he was always welcome to the voice of the town. Nay it is possible that the treaty of the managers with HILL for his translation was a reason why they refused the play from BOND. At any rate the historians seem to be wholly in the dark as to the real history of BOND, and therefore as it has been their usual practice, when they could not find out the truth; the private translation of *Zara*, they give at once to HILL, whose play was known, talked of, and stipulated for, long before it made its appearance, and who could not have had a doubt of its success at a time when VOLTAIRE's play was in every body's mouth as one of the most popular that ever was produced. In addition to all this I have an account which is corroborated as I understand by the Gentleman's Magazine of *Zara*, translated by a gentleman of the name of JOHNSON, and printed in the year 1735.

*Bribery.* DOWNS, not the promptor, brought out a play at Smock Alley, called *All Vows Kept*. POPPLE wrote *The Lady's Revenge*, and *The Double Deceit*. J. PHILIPS, an indifferent writer, produced *Love and Glory*, and a very poor thing called *The Rival Captains*. FABIAN wrote *Trick for Trick*.

Mrs. CHARKE, whose memoirs in the annals of profligacy make almost as conspicuous a figure as those of THEOPHILUS CIBBER, her brother, who, a sort of English D'EON, amused herself in fencing, shooting, riding races, currying horses, digging in gardens, and playing upon the fiddle, who was at different times an actress, a grocer, an alehouse keeper, a valet de chambre, a sausage seller, and a puppet shew woman, one day in affluence, the next in indigence, now confined in a spunging house, presently released by a subscription of prostitutes, in short one of those disgraces to the community that ought not to be admitted into society, wrote three strange pieces called *The Carnival*, *The Art of Management*, and *Tit for Tat*. CONOLLY wrote *The Connoisseur*, intended as a satire, in the style of SHADWELL and FOOTE. PRITCHARD produced *The Fall of Phaeton*, one of the pantomimical trifles which swarmed about that time. BAILLIE wrote a piece called *The Patriot*.



HARMAN brought out *The Female Rake*, performed once. HEWITT produced a comedy called *A Tutor for the Beaux*, the bad success of which piece did not teach the author prudence, for he brought forward a tragedy which had still less merit. LYNCH, wrote *The Independent Patriot*, and CHETWOOD says, *The Man of Honour*. Doubt however implies poverty of merit celebrity being the best test of success. To HARPER is given a piece called *The Mock Philosopher*, and to AYRE, *Aminta* from TASSO, and *Merope* from another Italian author. BROOKES, a clergyman, produced a Chinese piece called *Tchao Chi Cou Ell*. DAVEY brought out in IRELAND, *The Treacherous Husband*, BAKER wrote *The Madhouse*.

NEWTON wrote a trifle called *Alexis's Paradise*. BENNET produced another trifle called *The Beau's Adventure*. Mrs. COOPER, another dramatic trifler, wrote the *Rival Widows*, taken probably from St. FOIX, which had success through the curious expedient of the lady's performing the principal character on the nights of her benefit. The town allowed her in return to get the usual emoluments, but after the curtain dropt on the ninth night, it never rose again to this play. She wrote also *The Nobleman*; this piece did not succeed. WARD, an ac-

tor, published three pieces called *The Happy Lovers*, *The Petticoat Plotter*, and *The Widow's Wish*.

DALTON altered MILTON's *Comus* for the stage, and it must be confessed very judiciously, the songs, however, are many of them falsely attributed to him, for they were written by LANDSDOWNE, and other cotemporary poets \*. DOWER produced *The Salopian Squire*, in which he abuses the managers in a most outrageous manner for not receiving it, charging them with want of taste and judgment. If he could have looked at the play with impartial eyes, he would have found a better reason for their conduct. ROBINSON wrote a poor farce called *The Intriguing Milliners*. Mrs. BOYD, a voluminous reader, who therefore fancied she could write, pro-

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\* A critic loudly complains that the poetry was so little relished with all its incomparable merit that if it had not been for the charms of the music, the piece would not have extended to a second night. Had the same critic lived to witness the performance of *Comus* at the present time, he would have also to lament that the music, so highly honourable to genius, and to this country, is gone to sleep with the poetry; and that, thanks to mutilation and false taste, a combination of the talents of MILTON and ARNE, is now considered as an intrusion. I could vote most sincerely that this union of beautiful poetry and exquisite music might be performed at given periods as a condition of the theatrical patent, if it were only as a lesson to warn the lovers of harmony of their danger in listening to falsetto, divisions, cadences, and cantabiles.



duced two faragoes called *Don Sancho*, and *Minerva's Triumph*. BROWN with whom, to the reader's great satisfaction, I shall close my present account of authors, brought out a tragedy called *The Fatal Retirement*, which was deservedly damned\*.

Over and above this list of plays for which we have been able to find authors I count a hundred and eighty-five, many of them attributed to individuals, but none of them authentically traced to authors at all; and, now having got rid of materials which it was incumbent on me to produce, but which can have no great claim upon the reader's praise, except that due to accuracy and method, I shall proceed to particulars which will be more interesting, and of course more entertaining both to myself and to those I study to please.

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\* This play perhaps never would be remembered but by an anecdote relative to QUIN, who refused to act in it, and therefore was supposed to have occasioned its failure. In consequence of this he was frequently hissed by the author's friends when he came forward to perform other parts. At length, to put a stop to their importunity, he one evening told the audience that he had read the play before it was performed and given the author his sincere opinion that it was the very worst play he had ever read in his life, and for that reason had refused to act in it, in consequence of this address the audience of course silenced the cabal.

## CHAP. IV.

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GARRICK.

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IT is neither within my promise nor my inclination to put myself forward as the biographer of GARRICK. For my own part I think it very immaterial to the fame of a public character to manifest much anxiety as to where he was born, at what school he was brought up, and many other particulars which I am not to learn are held sacredly and indispensibly necessary in biography; a research generally however terminating in uncertainty, and disappointment, and which therefore unfortunately leaves this species of writing incomplete by the want of one of its attributed unities. As I have had opportunity to urge this before, and, as all those who esteem merit and genius for their intrinsic value will be naturally more solicitous to set up their locality than that of the person who possesses them, I shall endeavour to gratify these by a description of the mental acquisitions of GARRICK, which I had particular op-



portunity of watching for seven years through all their shades and gradations.

The words that CIBBER applied to BETTERTON, that he was an actor as SHAKESPERR was a poet, may unequivocally be applied to GARRICK, but one strong circumstance, which I believe has never been noticed, and which when noticed will be, sparingly at first perhaps, but afterwards generally and literally admitted, shews that GARRICK must have been nearer in his genius to the comparative merit of SHAKESPEAR than BETTERTON. This circumstance, which I assert without hesitation, is that GARRICK, at any time, on or off the stage, alone or in company, about whatever occupation, study or pursuit, or in short employed in any manner he might, was an actor, a complete actor, and nothing but an actor, exactly as POPE during the whole course of his life was a poet and nothing but a poet.

The acting of GARRICK on the stage was to acquire fame and fortune, than which nothing was ever more fairly earned and merited; and off the stage, to make that fame and fortune a source of reputation, consequence, and importance, and in this last species of acting he certainly manifested more po-

tent merit, more commanding talents, than in the first, incomparable as his public acting was. No man exacted homage from all ranks with more success than GARRICK. He was a man, as the Irish say, that you never caught without himself.

'Tis true that to attain this sort of rank with the world the marvellous fide must be perpetually turned outward, and the hidden springs and wires must be managed with great dexterity and exactness to keep up the deception. Any invention, however ingenious in its construction, and wonderful in its operation, would cease to excite admiration if the spectator was to discover that it worked upon common mechanical principles, and therefore GARRICK, who GOLDSMITH seems to have known *au fond*.

“ Who threw off his friends, as a huntsman his pack,  
“ For he knew well enough he could whistle them back,”

knew also that off the stage, as well as on, it was his business to subdue his own passions that he might the better subdue the passions of his spectators.

I never saw GARRICK either laugh or cry; that is to say, shed tears, or manifest mirth, or even pleasure, spontaneously, involuntarily, and from the soul.



I have seen him taking the hint from SHAKESPEAR, who has certainly well described real acting by the passage, “in a fiction, in a dream of passion, force  
“ his soul so to its conceit that from her working all  
“ his visage warmed.”

“ Tears in his eyes, distraction in’s aspect,  
“ A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
“ With forms to his conceit, and, all for nothing  
“ For Hecuba—”

All this and the opposite extreme were always at his command \*. His laugh was well put on, but it was not a natural laugh of his own. He seemed afraid that if he did not conquer a propensity to risibility in himself, the better to provoke it in his audience, he should like TOM THIMBLE, in the *Rehearsal*, be so tickled by the humour of his au-

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\* GARRICK would indulge some few friends—but it was very rare—with what he used to call his *rounds*.—This he did by standing behind a chair, and conveying into his face every possible kind of passion, blending one into the other, and as it were shadowing them with a prodigious number of gradations. At one moment you laughed, at another you cried : now he terrified you, and presently you conceived yourself something horrible, he seemed so terrified at you. Afterwards he drew his features into the appearance of such dignified wisdom, that MINERVA might have been proud of the portrait; and then—degrading yet admirable transition—he became a driveller. In short his face was what he obliged you to fancy it; age, youth, plenty, poverty, every thing it assumed.

thor, as not to be able to play his part. In short, no man will deny but that the very essence of excellent acting centered in GARRICK, and yet every member of the theatre will vouch for me, that the greatest and most astonishing effects produced by his acting arose from an artful suspension of his real feelings, lest they should provoke him into a sensibility which it was his business to transfer to his auditors.

In acting, the human passions would run riot were they not kept in absolute command. Feeling and sensibility are the riches of an actor, and would too soon be squandered if they were not managed with economy. There are very few situations in tragedy, and the great art is how to vary them. A passion, like a colour, must have a variety of shadows; nor will every shadow do for the same light; and I will even venture to say, that a good actor or actress should vary the mode of acting, according to the different dispositions of the audiences before whom they appear.

I sincerely mention this as my real sentiments on good acting. Every thing on the stage must be a little elevated. The scenes, if they were highly finished, would lose all their effect. The same mode must be observed in dress, and it holds good



throughout every thing else. A hero must not speak in common prose—it must be measured for him into what we call blank verse. This gives a dignity, an emphasis to the feeling that is to be expressed, and unless the actor who represents the character can so far possess himself with an idea that he is the very hero for the time being, he will never attain perfection as his substitute.

These requisites, which GARRICK taught himself on the stage, he could with the same facility transfer to his private conduct; and, whether he condescended at his own levee to smile at a borrowing actor who was praising his poetry, cut jokes with BECKET the bookseller, explain an unintelligible passage to PHIL BUTLER the carpenter, blame HOPKINS the prompter for having the gout because he was at the expence of chair hire, rebuke MES-SINK the pantomime trick maker for attempting to be witty, like him, chuckle at newspaper criticisms that he intended to buy off, or burn cards and letters from dukes, lords, judges, and bishops, to strike his dependants with awe and admiration—

Whether at court he honoured men of title with the hopes of bolstering up the reputation of some dramatic brat produced with the assistance of the

chaplain, whether ladies were promised that their friends should be disappointed of boxes that had never been let, or that the new fashion they last produced should be noticed in the next epilogue, or that an epitaph on a favourite parrot should grace the toilette table, or whether he appeared distressed that he could not be set down by an ambassador, because he had given a prior promise to a countess dowager—

Whether at the rehearsal of a piece, his own, he demanded an acknowledgment that every passage was the achme of perfection, or at the rehearsal of a piece, not his own, he himself allowed praise in proportion as he was permitted to make alterations; or, to be brief, in whatever manner by managing not the minds, for many of them were too ponderous for him to wield, but the tempers of men, both of the first wordly and professional distinction—he so played his part as to be courted, carressed, admired, and looked up to by rank and talents, with very slight pretensions to the character of eminent abilities himself otherwise than as an actor.

GARRICK professedly studied the character of CIBBER, than whom however he possessed more consummate abilities except as a writer, but he



blended with this character the essence of every other that had been celebrated for acquiring fame by wordly conduct, and possessed so much super-added good sense, that he seldom ran into any of their inferior follies, and never into those of any magnitude. He had what he called common sense, to which he gave an unbounded definition, and practically shewed that its meaning was to take every advantage within the pale of fair dealing, upon the mart, like a chapman; upon this principle he conducted all his wordly concerns, liberal in offers, and close at a bargain.

By this mode of conduct, though his wishes were characterized by boundless ambition, he never let them impose upon his reason, and thus, by never out-soaring his strength, he was at no time in danger of falling. GARRICK might have been laureat, he might have had a seat in parliament, he might have been knighted, but he knew he could write a prologue better than a birth day ode, that his oratory would have been a poor business if it had been called upon extemporaneously in his own language, and without dress and action, and he could anticipate the ridicule of seeing against the wall the

part of Abel Drugger to be performed by Sir DAVID GARRICK.

All these meritorious acts of becoming forbearance spoke in him the highest degree of good sense, and became the foundation of that general action by which he commanded the attention, the regard, the solicitude, and better than these, the contributions of mankind. It was this put into practise, through the medium of common sense, as we have seen it defined, that made him the idol of the great in fortune, and the great in talents; to none of whom he was at any time offensive, though he always arrogated equality. In short, he was a duke, a lawgiver, a philosopher, a logician, an architect, a painter, nay a scholar, and a critic, and even in the opinions of those most eminent for these distinctions, when in fact those sentiments which he had deliberately collected, and which he sported through the advantage of a lucky moment, were the studied ideas of others, acted by him.

One of GARRICK's great strokes of Mundane acting was the fame he was so solicitous to command abroad, in which he so succeeded that the French accounts of him in particular, which it is a



pity his biographers had no opportunity of consulting, exalt his merit, excellent as it was, infinitely beyond any thing that we have of him \*. It was,

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\* Speaking of his acting, a French author has the following passage. "GARRICK the celebrated English ROSCIUS has alone, perhaps, been capable of conveying all that we have heard or can conceive of the astonishing acting of the ancients. I saw him in "LONDON," says the writer, "perform a tyrant who dies on the stage terrified with the enormity of his crimes and tormented with remorse. Humanity in the last moments of this tyrant triumphs over his crimes, his murders, and his barbarity. Sensible too late of his villainy, his reflections are his judge and his executioner: overwhelmed with this dreadful conflict he dies piece meal; his eyes begin to be extinguished, his voice can scarcely articulate his ineffectual penitence; his gestures announce his last moment; nature, yet retains some strength, and, as the human faculties decay and horrible phantoms bring his crimes to his imagination, in his frantic fear he struggles with death and is overcome; he now faintly freezes with horror; he tears up the earth and seems in maddening fancy to dig his grave; and now the moment of death arrives, and the convulsive distraction of his face, his quivering lips, the extension of his arms, and a last agonizing sigh, give the finishing stroke to this terrible picture."

In another French writer I find the following anecdote of GARRICK told as a proof that he could not only at will represent all passions but all persons. "A woman of fashion in London," says this writer, "had a great desire to procure the portrait of a nobleman with whom she was in love, but who had a particular aversion to sit for his picture. She prevailed upon GARRICK to notice the face of this lord, and so possess himself of his features that the painter might easily design a faithful likeness through the medium of his borrowed resemblance. This was undertaken; and, after

however, occasioned sometimes by rather bold and prodigious flights. A friend might have shuddered for him to have been present when VOLTAIRE received his Ode on SHAKESPEAR, especially as it happened at the time when that dictator was fretting away his life in his retirement at GENEVA, and fulminating his critical anathemas against dunces; but whether he was softened by the present that accompanied it, or however he might be wrought upon by that magical persuasion which GARRICK sometimes accorded but never gave, it is certain, for I saw it, that the circumstance produced an acknowledgment full of insincere praise of which GARRICK believed perhaps but very little, but, what was better for him, the world believed the whole.

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“ having studied every trait and gesture, and each possible manner  
“ of giving them variety till it was no longer GARRICK, but My  
“ Lord, the painter was set to work, and so succeeded that the portrait was universally known for the nobleman in question who was  
“ the first to express his astonishment at so perfect a likeness being  
“ obtained without his knowledge, and who liberally rewarded the  
“ actor and married the lady, in return for her love, and her ingenuity.” I never heard of this anecdote through any other channel. There is a story told that GARRICK frightened HOGARTH by appearing to him as the ghost of FIELDING, whom he so resembled by altering his features that HOGARTH is said never to have recovered the shock. It is a strange story however, unless GARRICK walked upon stilts.



In the performance of all these various parts, one consideration obtruded itself on GARRICK's mind and operated as a material deduction from the applause so lavishly bestowed on so much professional excellence. This was no less than a continual foreboding occasioned by certain flies that perpetually buzzed about him and never ceased to tease and torment him till they were suffered to suck their fill and drop off. If he had set out with a firm and resolute determination, the fatal examples of DRYDEN and POPE before him, to have armed himself with indifference, they would have hummed their day and been forgotten; but he wanted strength of mind to take this course. He should have considered that he had not the abilities to resort to *Mac Flecknoes* and *Dunciads*, or even had he been capable of wielding such formidable weapons, they had been already rendered useless by the immaterial beings they had to cope with. Clubs cannot wound atoms.

GARRICK, a better actor in every other respect, though constantly his emulator, unfortunately disdained to copy CIBBER in this; half of whose reputation at least was owing to a steady resolution of disregarding anonymous cavillers, or else coaxing them into some scrape that he might take a most tri-

umphant advantage of them. CIBBER turned the satire in the *Dunciad* most pointedly against POPE, whereas GARRICK would have sunk under it; but CIBBER was a writer of a different description, far however from being perfect, and this he so truly knew and so honestly acknowledged, that cavil was by him politically deprecated, and the shafts of ill nature disarmed by anticipation.

Had GARRICK given an idea that he went for nothing but a prologue writer, and that his other productions were merely in aid of that experience and dramatic knowledge which as a manager he must necessarily possess, the fostering care of the public would have carressed and nurtured these offsprings of diffidence, and, having adopted them, have become so blind to their foibles that he would have received credit for much more than his fair reputation; whereas, fondly fancying that the world implicitly believed him an author of first rate merit, that they would find better poetry in his prologues than in those of DRYDEN, truer character and nature in his plays than in any of his predecessors, and more lyric beauty in his *Ode* than in *Alexander's Feast*, the world have not come up to his actual desert, but have sunk him in every other respect, and quietly have set him down as a mere prologue writer; which



as the subjects of his prologues and epilogues were merely temporary and a lash at some prevailing folly, is every thing but denying him any merit as a writer at all.

Unfortunately this was GARRICK's foible. His writings were his tendon Achilles, which the meereft witling was at any time Paris enough to find out; and, lest he feared it would remain undiscovered, unless he himself perpetually exposed it, he unnecessarily and upon every trivial occasion bared it to view; till, by shewing how he might be wounded, the worst bungler at critical archery in all Grubstreet, was sure to hit him.

When he was afraid the wits should be satirical on his marriage, he anticipated their satire by calling himself

“ A very Sir JOHN BRUTE all day,

“ And FRIBBLE all the night.”

When he trembled at what he feared might be the judgment of the critics on his performance of Macbeth, he foolishly wrote a pamphlet “ on the mimical behaviour of a certain fashionable faulty actor.” When he dreaded the censure and ridicule that he imagined he should be greeted with on his return from a tour to ITALY, he produced the *Sick Monkey*

as a ridicule on what was supposed to have been his conduct abroad. These are some of the instances in which his favourite common sense deserted him.

He imagined that these things would be considered as illiberal, and therefore treated them with contempt. There were three risks in this; first, filth generally sticks, and in this world many want ability, and more inclination to rub it off; secondly, in this pretended satire it was possible that faults might have been exposed through consciousness which an indifferent person would never have suspected; and lastly, a discovery might have been attended with indelible, because meritorious, ridicule. His conduct was evidently an imitation of POPE in relation to his pastorals, but POPE had more ability, and his reputation was less involved.

Upon an examination of his conduct as it was concerned in those transactions that led him to the management of the theatre, which most worthily improved it into an extraordinary degree of credit and reputation, his character and genius will more gradually develope than in a studied detail, I shall therefore cease to speak of him particularly till I have traced the steps by which he ascended to the highest pitch of fame and fortune.



## CHAP. V.

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STATE OF THE STAGE FROM 1741 TO 1763.

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AS GARRICK, in imitation of CIBBER, not only looked up from his infancy to the chair of ROSCIUS, which CHURCHILL accorded him after he had possessed it by universal suffrage, but also to the chair of management, it will be necessary to shew what a theatrical MACHIAVAL he was in attaining the first reputation in both capacities, neither situations having been filled at any time with such ability or such credit.

To drop at present the merit of GARRICK as an actor, to whom in that capacity I shall hereafter pay my tribute of warm and willing admiration, let us see with what cautious and wary judgment he conducted himself to become a master of his profession; and while the account is read by all young actors who emulate his merit, let them at the same time emulate his industry, his various trials of his thea-

trical powers, his gradual ascent to superiority, or let them for ever despair of attaining his excellence, or indeed any excellence as actors.

GARRICK knew that the profession he was peculiarly gifted to fill required more variety of requisites than any other, that there is scarcely any accomplishment the human mind or form is capable of receiving but must be studied and learnt by the actor; that conception and memory which are too often considered as perfection in the science of acting are only parts of a complicate whole, and that without the possession of every one of these various qualities, which acquire versatility, and teach the passions a capable scope of representing human nature in all its moods and humours, an actor can no more be perfect than a watch without its wheels.

GARRICK knowing this, both by the examples of those actors in the school of BETTERTON, and by his own consummate keenness and foresight, determined to be sure of his mark, and that the arrow should go beyond the barb; instead, therefore, of risking a raw and unexperienced genius and venturing crudity and awkwardness, he put himself to school, and not only learnt practically every thing that experience could give as to the exercise of his



versatile powers in tragedy and comedy, but head-ded dancing, fencing, and pantomime, and even studied the character of Harlequin.

Thus his first appearance was facination, for it blended all the attraction of novelty with veteran experience. It was useless, for QUIN to say that "it was a fashion and would soon be over. It was a new religion; that WHITFIELD was followed for a time, but the people came back again to church." "It was not heresy but reformation," as GARRICK himself wittily enough said in reply, and it proved so, for the world with one consent stamp it as theatrical orthodoxy.

GARRICK's great success, which thinned the other theatres and brought all the world to Goodman's Fields, began very early to prove a source of fortune in proportion to the favour he received, which was prodigious. GIFFARD gave him half the profits, and he soon of course amassed a very large sum, for he performed every night for a considerable time. This would have been a serious blow at the fame and fortune of the theatres had not an application been intended, though I believe never made, to government, which was backed by the authority of Sir JOHN BARNARD, who in the name of

the city was prepared to revive those objections which we have already seen preferred by the magistrates, lest the theatre should be an injury to the members of the commercial part of the town by being immediately seated among them.

GARRICK seeing plainly how this would operate proposed to accommodate matters with FLEETWOOD, provided GIFFARD were made a party to the treaty. This was soon adjusted, and he received five hundred a year for his acting, and GIFFARD appears to have been satisfied with the emolument allotted him in return for giving up a concern which he held by no legal authority.

GARRICK being now come to Drury Lane, and having in the following summer experienced improvement, reputation, and profit by an excursion to DUBLIN, where he was so attended that the vast crouding produced a contagious disorder which was called GARRICK's fever, began to look forward towards the management; and, while FLEETWOOD was swindling the tradesmen and performers, and bribing attornies and bailiffs to keep executions out of the house which it was their duty to levy, he fortified himself for the occasion both as to property and friends. He saw, however, that the moment



was not arrived for him to step forward, for that the theatre was going so fast to ruin that it would be extremely difficult to have any concern in it without involving his private fortune with the general interest of the concern.

He was taught by this an extraordinary contemplation. He could not be insensible that, properly applied, the large sums his performance brought to the theatre might have liquidated, or at least lessened the demands on the property so as to make it in time a clear possession to the proprietor; but the reverse was the fact. The treasury was the sieves of the Danaides always full and always empty, and FLEETWOOD plainly saw that, by a proper gloss and a little adroitness in legerdemain, hidden by well applied juggling and small talk, the richer he got the more he should persuade the poor devils who were mortified at his pride, his insolence, and his want of feeling, but at the same time delighted by his good humour, his wit, and his plausibility, to believe him in necessity.

What a school was this for parsimony to a parsimonious man like GARRICK. I never heard that there was any complaint as to his money, indeed it has been thought that GARRICK, MACKLIN, and

another or two, were in a compact with FLEETWOOD that so he might laugh at the rest of the company, covered by their united strength. I scarcely know, however, how to give credit to this, because MACKLIN declared in my hearing, and in the presence of several gentlemen now living, that it was the business of the performers to invent all manner of tricks to procure that money which, though their own, they could not obtain by persuasion, importunity, or menace, and that he himself, who was empowered as acting manager to undertake for the payment of certain articles, and was therefore in some sort amenable, was once under the necessity of putting into practice a stratagem in which he pretended to have broke out of Newgate, where he said he had been put by a creditor, and thereby obtained the sum he wanted, which he appropriated to his own use, it being part of his just demand, and afterwards left the creditor to sue FLEETWOOD.

Certainly somehow or other GARRICK found his account in staying at Drury Lane, for Covent Garden was at any time open to him; but he accepted no engagement any where till 1745, at which time, though the published accounts are against me, I think it very probable that FLEETWOOD went to FRANCE, and not in 1747, as it is generally believed, for at



that time the patent was sold by FLEETWOOD to GREEN and AMBER. bankers in the city, who speculated upon it clogged with a hopeful condition no less than that LACEY, who we shall presently see as the partner of GARRICK, was to manage the concern.

LACEY had been a sort of assistant to RICH, after leaving an unprofitable trade at NORWICH, and becoming a very indifferent actor. The conditions of this purchase were that GREEN and AMBER should pay three thousand two hundred pounds for the patent, and an annuity to FLEETWOOD, till it should be expired, of six hundred pounds, and at the same time a mortgage of seven thousand pounds on the property was suffered to remain, and LACEY for his management was to have a third of the profits. GREEN and AMBER in a very short time became bankrupts, and the patent was put up to public sale. Whether, therefore, GARRICK foresaw every one of these consequences and did not chuse to interfere till a clear and an easy purchase should present itself, or perhaps till his interest was strengthened by an accumulation of connections, it is equally certain that from the moment of his first appearance he had an eye to the management, and that he determined to forbear from engaging in it till it should

be in his power to do so without being entangled or embarrassed.

This is pretty well proved by his conduct previous to his taking the management, which was of a piece with that prior to his commencing actor ; for, as he had gone in 1740 to Ipswich to try the effect of his personal appearance on the stage, so, in 1745, he went again to IRELAND, in order to feel out what his deportment ought to be as director behind the scenes, and even here he proved himself an excellent discriminator, for he allied himself to Mr. SHERIDAN, a man from whose knowledge, judgment, liberality, and rectitude he would not fail to receive every instruction necessary for his purpose.

After attaining this experience GARRICK engaged himself at Covent Garden during the season of 1746, and then in conjunction with LACEY purchased the patent, and paid off the mortgage, the whole sum amounting to twelve thousand pounds. They also continued FLEETWOOD's annuity, which certainly was not all he got by the bargain ; for besides the three thousand pounds he received for the patent, very little of which one would suppose he gave to his creditors, he most probably had been for a considerable time saving out of the fire. I



can myself vouch that his son, I do not mean the son that went to India, but him to whom he left his fortune, lived about four and thirty years ago in a very handsome style, went to court, and joined in expensive pleasures with people of distinction.

It is true this fortune was dissipated in a few years, but it must certainly have been something very considerable, and as this was at the distance of sixteen or seventeen years after the expiration of the patent, when the annuity to FLEETWOOD ceased, he must have saved money, and that not a trifle, exclusively, that is to say, out of the earnings of those performers he cajoled, imposed upon, disappointed, delighted, and robbed.

The next wonder is how LACEY could get the money to purchase his share of the patent, for we know he was not assisted by GARRICK, because his full and entire half remained with him till that unfortunate propensity to dig for coals in OXFORDSHIRE induced him to get also a propensity of mortgaging his share piecemeal to his partner. It has been said that he bought a very beautiful horse to captivate the Duke of GRAFTON; who, offering any price for it, was told that the highest price that could be

fixed for it would be his Grace's acceptance, which handsome offer being graciously acceded to, he, through the interest of this nobleman, obtained a renewal of the patent, and that, therefore, he was assisted by GARRICK; but this is very improbable, for it is not difficult to see that GARRICK could scarcely at that time have hinted a request to persons of condition and in power which would not have been readily granted, especially any thing so evidently beneficial to the public and the credit of the theatre, after the distress and discredit it had so long experienced.

The real fact must remain a mystery \*. In the mean time it is my business to relate that, with a renewal of the patent these joint proprietors upon equal shares opened the theatre in 1747, with JOHNSON's celebrated Prologue. The best actors and actresses of

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\* I have taken some pains to come at this fact, though after all it is not of any great importance. LACEY was manager during the short time that GREEN and AMBER held the property, and after their bankruptcy, perhaps in trust for the assignees, and I am informed, from an authority I cannot doubt, that he immediately previous to GARRICK's joining with him in the management, stood in a manner in FLEETWOOD's shoes, and compounded with the performers and creditors of different descriptions, which is an additional argument in proof of GARRICK's stipulating for a clear stage and no favour.



course rallied round GARRICK, and he was soon reinforced by BARRY, Mrs. PRITCHARD, and Mrs. CIBBER.

As to Covent Garden theatre it continued till 1760, to be uninterruptedly managed by RICH; who, it must be confessed, upon his father's plan, though he was not the same nefarious character, continued to keep himself up as a formidable rival to the managers of Drury Lane. His own performance of Harlequin, and the advantage he took of English inclination for foreign gewgaws now and then operated in his favour with decided superiority. In the time of FLEETWOOD, his pantomimes were a great injury to his opponents; and, though I do not find he was ever splendidly off, indeed he is described to have been at one time so necessitated as to have taken a house situated in three different counties to avoid the importunity of the Sheriffs' officers, yet he took care to satisfy, to the letter, his performers, and all those with whom he made engagements.

This gave him a certain respectability without which no concern can maintain solid reputation; but his situation was nevertheless fluctuating, for, though at times the run of a successful pantomime filled his treasury, yet his ignorance of the common

business of the theatre, and want of discernment as to the merit of performers, gave the other house a pre-eminence which, with all the assistance of QUIN and others, bespoke the favour of the critical and the judicious, especially after it began to feel the influence of GARRICK's management.

Thus the success of RICH was by fits and starts. At Christmas, perhaps, his house overflowed, and caricature prints were circulated with Harlequin weighing down the theatrical scales, and GARRICK, BARRY, and all the force of Drury Lane kicking the beam; the infatuation over, his benches were empty and continued so till the French painter invented new scenery, and he perfected himself in new attitudes, and invented new pantomime tricks.

RICH, by this means, was of great utility throughout his whole management to the general theatrical interest. He was what a formidable minority are to an able ministry; and, though his measures were not so efficacious; yet it kept the exertions of his opponents braced to their full strength and vigour, and this, by the operation now and then of a lucky hit, wrought wonderfully in his favour, both as to advantage and popularity. We have seen one instance of this in the *Beggar's Opera*. His own perfor-



mance also, which was incomparable in its way, was greatly followed, and when GARRICK ran *Romeo and Juliet*, in which he and Mrs. CIBBER performed the lovers, RICH instantly opposed to them BARRY and Miss NOSSITER.

By these and other spirited instances of opposition he kept up a constant and formidable bustle which it required very frequently the whole united force of his rivals to oppose. In Spectacle he was confessedly superior to them; and as GARRICK knew and felt this, he ought to have entered into no competition with him, but have rested his sole expectation on the more respectable ground of giving every advantage to tragedy and comedy, and this he would very probably have done had it not been that sufficient novelty was not to be procured, fewer authors of eminence by a considerable difference, as we shall presently see, having appeared during the first sixteen years of his management than during any equal period since SHAKESPEARE.

To this it may, perhaps, be owing that GARRICK was obliged to permit Spectacle occasionally in his own defence. It however at length sapped the foundation of his popularity; for, when RICH brought out *The Coronation*, which so completely

and deservedly triumphed over the stupid, niggardly, parsimonious apology for it, that had been for a few nights foisted on the public at Drury Lane, Covent Garden began to feel a powerful superiority.

This superiority gathered such strength that it began to master the whole exertions of GARRICK, gigantic as they were. These advantages a number of circumstances combined to strengthen. BEARD, perhaps upon the whole the best English singer that ever was heard, whose excellence I shall not interrupt the thread of my present narrative to describe, had married the daughter of RICH, and stepped pretty forward in the musical management. This circumstance induced GARRICK to play off the old trick of *Romeo and Juliet*, by opposing LOWE and Mrs. VINCENT, as Macheath and Polly in the *Beggar's Opera*, to BEARD and Miss BRENT, which, by way of parenthesis, provoked RICH to start WILKINSON in the *Minor* against FOOTE. The contest, however operated greatly against Drury Lane. BEARD at the head of his phalanx was irresistible, and certainly at no period has the real excellence and true character of English music been so well understood or so highly relished.

Though it would be irregular to go at length



into this subject now, yet I shall indulge myself with saying a few proud words merely to shew that, in arts as well as in arms, we want only union to conquer the world. The public decision was at that time honest, fair, candid and impartial. The Italian opera was in a state of merited celebrity which it had never known before, nor can ever know again; yet was the true and genuine beauties of English music felt and acknowledged, and the same taste and judgment that admired the delicacy, the sweetness, and the grandeur of JOMELLI, GALLUPPI, and PERGOLESE, delighted in the nature, the truth, and the beauty of PURCELL, ARNE, and BOYCE.

RICH, at the instance of BEARD, brought forward every thing which had musical merit with every possible advantage. The *Beggar's Opera*, and The *Jovial Crew*, were relieved by The *Chaplet*, and The *Shepherd's Lottery*; and, to give contrast consequence, and diversity to those familiar materials, *Comus*, that wonderful union of exquisite sound, with incomparable sense, which in these days of elephants, dragons, and flying cats, after being tortured, crippled, and mutilated, is compelled to halt on and sing the dirge to its once perfect existence, was brought forward with all its appropriate advantages, playful, winning, and diffusing round

that enchantment by which the theatre was intended to delight and improve its auditors.

RICH died during the run of *The Coronation*, having accomplished the sum of his glory, and left the theatre in equal shares between his widow and Mrs. BEARD, Mrs. BENCROFT, and Mrs. MORRIS, his three daughters. BEARD was very sensibly appointed manager; who, dreading, perhaps the superior power and ability of GARRICK, whom he both loved and feared, determined to raise as formidable an opposition as possible upon the only ground on which he was able to make any thing like an effectual stand.

Italian singing was at that time rationally and judiciously tasted. He therefore thought that if opera could be attempted upon a grand scale to a grand effect it might give our theatres a consequence as to music, which it had never known before. He knew there was an Englishman in whom were united the great requisites of all the Italian school; whose genius, mind, understanding, and knowledge were superlative. He knew the composition of this man could be greatly supported with but very little auxiliary assistance, and the world were thus obliged by, perhaps, the greatest musical production in its



way in this or any other country, the *Artaxerxes* of ARNE.

Other musical pieces followed, as we shall presently see in their place, till the property of Covent Garden became so valuable that it was at length eagerly purchased in 1767 for sixty thousand pounds. Thus we find that the unremitting success of this theatre was the sole cause of GARRICK's retirement to ITALY. He had no novelty to produce that could stem this torrent. Host as he was, he was almost alone. There were scarcely any authors to support him; and, as to actors, KING had certainly attained that height of reputation which he has ever since invariably maintained and kept; but HOLLAND, and O'BRIEN, were only opening into fame. QUIN had long retired, and IRELAND had deprived the stage of BARRY, and WOODWARD. He had certainly started POWEL, whose merit he is said to have dreaded, which I can scarcely credit, because he knew better than any body that, admirable as POWEL's genius was, with so poor an understanding, it must run riot.

Thus the literal fact is, that the public were no longer GARRICK-mad, which I say more to their

thame than to his. His name was no longer an attraction. He performed to empty benches, notwithstanding the last season before he left ENGLAND he personated Scrub, the Ghost in *Hamlet*, and a great variety of other charcters in which he had never before appeared, and this very naturally made him so sick that he retired to ITALY, that the public might feel his loss; which they did most completely by the management of his partner; who, finding *Artaxerxes* had grown into high celebrity instantly brought out a string of ferious operas, without considering that to produce pieces of that description it is necessary to have writers, composers, and singers.

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## CHAP. VI.

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GARRICK AS AN AUTHOR TO 1763.

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THOUGH the merit of GARRICK, considered as an author, is the deepest shade in his public character, yet it is one that very frequently relieves the picture to advantage; for, though, had he been nothing else his reputation would have been indeed but of a very inferior kind, the assistance this quality lent to the stage, and to stage effect, was of a first rate consequence, for it improved and elevated his own acting, seperated, simplified, and regulated the productions of greater talents, and gave altogether a tone to the theatre which rendered it within the comprehension and taste of the public, and highly promoted its interest as a school of nature.

As manager, a quality of this perfect kind was to him and indeed to the public of consummate advantage, and his conduct here in opposition to CIBBER shews that he not only possessed it in a much

more eminent degree, but knew better how to make use of it; for GARRICK would never have refused *The Beggar's Opera*, which CIBBER did; he knew too well his own interest. It is true we shall at times trace some traits of the man that now and then eclipsed the actor, such as his refusal of *She Stoops to Conquer*, because GOLDSMITH wrote *Retaliation*\*, and other instances; but upon the whole his judgment was a very material cause of the success of dramatic authors in the reign of GARRICK.

Justice obliges us from this conclusion to acknowledge that GARRICK's merit, as a dramatic writer,

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\* GOLDSMITH's account of this in my hearing was that GARRICK wanted to foist in so much stuff of his own that he grew tired of his objections and would not leave the play with him, which foisting in, perhaps, would have done the effect of the play no injury, though GOLDSMITH was twenty times a better writer than GARRICK; but this was not the case. GOLDSMITH had offended GARRICK, for a forced smile with him was always a symptom of anger, and therefore he would not take the pains to whistle to him. Thus knowing that GOLDSMITH was tremblingly alive all o'er upon all such occasions, which as an author was natural enough; but as a playwright might have been spared, he only claimed the privilege that other authors had given who had been benefited by his assistance, and this offer being, as he knew it would be, refused, he had a fair excuse for getting rid of the play, which both his resentment to GOLDSMITH and his friendship to KELLY, who, together with sentimental comedy was cut up by it, had predetermined him not to accept upon any account.



consists more of what is concealed from the public than what has been published; for he had little genius and great judgment, and, therefore, though his judgment became of the highest consequence in directing genius in the productions of others it only served to detect a paucity of genius in his own.

There is another and a material deduction from the merit of GARRICK, and yet it ought not to weigh against his reputation. I mean the reiterated necessity of writing pieces for temporary purposes in quality of manager. We have seen the best talents upon these subjects wasted to little purpose, and therefore much merit is attributable to him, who never actually failed in any one of these instances; on the contrary, there, as every where else, whatever absence there might be of excellent poetry and fine conception in his pieces of this stamp, those deficiencies were so made up by disposition and effect, that his judgment kept his reputation constantly afloat. Having premised so much, which certainly is but fair and candid, we shall let his dramatic pieces speak for themselves, at the same time that they bring out such collateral circumstances as may serve to illustrate the history of the stage.

It is plain that GARRICK had predetermined to

become an author as soon as possible, under an idea that if bad acting could be defended by an able pen good acting might be celebrated even by an indifferent one. To manifest, therefore, as soon as possible that such was his resolution, he brought out the *Lying Valet* in 1741, the very season of his first appearance in Goodman's Fields, in which, of course, he performed the principal character. He has been accused of borrowing this piece from the French, and indeed Sharp has a family resemblance of all the Scapins, and Crispins, and Frontins of that theatre; it is not, however, the likeness of any one character but of the Valet, not only of FRANCE but of ENGLAND, and every where else. He lies out of fidelity to his master, he is in love with the chambermaid of his master's mistress, and he is, in short, what every other convenient servant ever was and ever will be. This is only the vehicle. The piece itself appears to me to be original, and is, as far as it goes, a complete dramatic performance. It is full of pleasantry, interest, and effect, the writing is elevated enough for the purpose, and it has fewer faults than many productions of much greater men. I say so much because I rather think that it is GARRICK's most complete dramatic production, and this shews that his mind was well made up to his profession at starting.



Whether GARRICK's time was so taken up in the study and performance of that prodigious number of parts of all descriptions by which he acquired so deservedly the highest reputation, or whether he found any difficulty in keeping FLEETWOOD to a performance of his engagements, he did not bring out his next piece, which was *Miss in her Teens*, till the latter part of the season in which he was engaged with RICH. This piece had so much success that on the fifteenth night, a fact that I had both from RICH and GARRICK, when the author received the play bills, he found his name advertised for a second benefit, without his previous knowledge. RICH declared there was so much merit in the piece, and it had done the theatre so much service, that the compliment itself would not have been recompense enough without this manner of conveying it, and GARRICK said that he valued it only upon that account. At the same time it must be confessed that RICH has said he would not have done this had he expected to have lost GARRICK, and GARRICK, though he was struck with the generosity of the action, never imitated it but once during his whole management. *Miss in her Teens* derived its best reputation from the performance of GARRICK and WOODWARD, in Fribble and

Flash. The piece itself is a strong caricature, and therefore very little in nature.

*Lethe* was the first piece written by GARRICK, which was produced after he became manager of Drury Lane. It had made its appearance at the same theatre in 1740, but it was then a mere sketch and soon withdrawn. GARRICK has added the character of Lord Chalkstone when he produced it in 1747, which he acted most admirably. I cannot refrain from noticing that all the world have been deceived in the idea that this piece is taken from the French, and was originally called *Les Eaux D'Oblivion*, and I was myself in the error. I have however searched every authority, and particularly a book where I have at one view every piece that ever came out at the French theatre from the Troubadours up to 1773, and there is no such piece to be found.

*Romeo and Juliet*, which play has been repeatedly altered on account of the sudden change in Romeo's love from Rosalind to Juliet, and the effect of the catastrophe which was conceived to be incomplete, the propriety of which objections I have considered before, had so much effect that it has ever since kept the stage. GARRICK has touched



SHAKESPEAR with much modesty and deference. It gave great assistance to his own incomparable acting. *Every Man in his Humour* is BEN JONSON'S comedy altered with the same view to the original author's reputation. The *Fairies* from the *Midsommer's Night's Dream*, was attempted by GARRICK to less effect, though formed into an opera with the addition of songs by some celebrated writers. There was merit in it; but the different ingredients did not mix. It was performed by children. It was composed by SMITH, HANDEL'S pupil; a good musician with but little genius. The *Tempest*. This piece was some of SHAKESPEAR'S scenes made into an opera, and also composed by SMITH. It had little effect; GARRICK should not have brought it out; it was sacrificing SHAKESPEAR to his own vanity. *Florizel and Perdita* was produced from a better motive. The two parts of the *Winter's Tale* can bear separation on account of the great distance of time. GARRICK preserved SHAKESPEAR. This piece, with the addition of songs, was afterwards performed at Covent Garden, the music was beautifully composed by ARNE. *Catherine and Petruchio* is SHAKESPEAR'S *Taming of the Shrew*, cut into a farce, which every body has seen and every body admires. These are the occasions on which GARRICK evinced great dramatic judgment.

*Lilliput* was performed in 1757. This was the worst of GARRICK's pieces. It had very little success. It was performed by children. The *Male Coquette*, 1757. This piece was written at a very short warning for WOOWARD's benefit, and intended to ridicule a species of men, or rather non-entities, who, though incapable of love, and insensible of female loveliness, talk like LOTHARIO of beauty that they never saw, and fancy raptures that they never felt. The character, however, was so disgusting that as it involved an unmanly and shocking idea with it, the public very properly revolted at it. *Fribble* was bad enough, but *Dafodil* was detestable.

GARRICK altered *The Gamester* from SMIRLEY in 1751. I have already explained the merit of of this alteration which is not so judicious as the alterations of GARRICK in general. *Isabella* is altered from SOUTHERN by leaving out the comic part, much to the advantage of the play. The *Guardian*, a comedy of two acts, performed in 1759, and written for the purpose of bringing forward Miss PRITCHARD, daughter to the celebrated actresses of that name, is taken from the *Pupile* of FAGAN. The success of Mademoiselle GAUSSIN in this piece, who was complimented with verses out of number, induced GARRICK, perhaps, to hope that his *Pupile* would arrive at the same celebrity. He was, how-



ever, mistaken. He brought it out with the united strength of himself, YATES, and O'BRIEN, and it had, as it deserved, great success.

The *Enchanter*, a kind of opera. It was merely a passable piece. The music was by SMITH; and LEONI, then a boy, appeared in it to great advantage. *Cymbeline*, in which GARRICK performed Posthumous so admirably, is of course SHAKESPEAR's play, whose fame is certainly rescued from HAWKINS, MARSH, BROOKS, and others, who had handled it too roughly. GARRICK, however, has sunk the conduct of the physician, which accounts for the harmless potion swallowed by Imogen, and therefore the piece is incomplete. The *Farmer's Return from London*, was a temporary interlude written happily enough to ridicule the Cock Lane Ghost, which at that time engrossed the talk of the town. This is the last production of GARRICK before his tour to ITALY. I shall therefore examine other authors up to that time, a review of whose works will bring out many collateral particulars relative to GARRICK.

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## CHAP. VII.

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FOOTE, MACKLIN, AND MURPHY.

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To shew how much the stage was indebted to GARRICK as an actor, and how transcendantly admirable his acting must have been, he maintained that great rank in reputation he so meritoriously filled during twenty-two years without the advantage of performing original characters, except a very few, and those were principally written by himself.

As a proof of this, I cannot find during that period as many celebrated writers as I have often enumerated, in the course of this work, within a given period of five or six years. Instead, therefore, of inserting in the head of this chapter the names of several writers of dramatic fame, I am unable to discover more than FOOTE, MACKLIN, and MURPHY. What then could possibly have kept the reputation of the theatre and brought it step by step to that bright fame it acquired, but the vigilance added to the transcendant merit of GARRICK, who



ransacked the hidden treasures of SHAKESPEAR, and his cotemporaries, brought them to view and gave them a polish by his exquisite acting. MASSINGER, in some degree, eclipsed SHAKESPEAR, immediately before GARRICK.

FOOTE, an admirable but a most mischievous writer, who emulated ARISTOPHANES with less genius and less feeling, who seemed fondly to fancy that to torture individuals was the only way to delight their fellow creatures, measuring their pleasure by his malignity, who knew no quality of satire but personality, who would sacrifice his best friend for the gratification of tormenting him, and who, after all was perpetually the cats paw to his own vanity, created, among the fastidious, the sour, and the heart burnt, a sort of veneration for that exotic from GREECE the middle comedy, which greatly to the honour of the manly and benevolent character of the English, may have a dwindling and a rickety existence, but can never flourish to maturity in this country.

Who cares now for any thing that CHURCHILL wrote? The topic of the day kept the world a tip toe for every new libel in which public men were branded with the accusation of public crimes to lift

into notice private profligates and apostates. Had such talents, for they were certainly eminent, been employed in general satire, which, by admonishing all, corrects many, and privately induces amendment by conviction. CHURCHILL would have lived in our minds. Now he is forgotten. Common nature is often absurd, but it is never monstrous. An indelible stain upon the reputation of DRYDEN, and of POPE, was caused by *Mac Flecknoe*, and the *Dunciad*, FOOTE, like CHURCHILL, was stained in this manner all over, and would have been at this moment as fast, for neither of them can ever be peaceably asleep, if it were not for an attempt now and then to revive his pieces, which, however, their malice being defeated, have now but little attraction.

There is another thing which naturally presents itself on an examination of these Drawcanfirs, these dealers in flats, who expect the world to pay an implicit obedience, not to their opinions, for I will not be so uncharitable as to believe they always think what they write, but to their assertions, and this is, that, upon the principal that all critics ought to possess in their own minds a certificate of their ability to write as well as those authors they criticise, so the minds of all moral menders ought to be moral.



As the dramatic pieces of FOOTE will bring out various observations naturally connected with them, I shall now proceed to their examination. *Taste.* This piece was produced in 1752, at which time FOOTE was in that prosperity which rendered it needless to write for profit. He therefore gave all the emoluments to the celebrated JEMMY WORSDALE, the very person who took POPE's manuscript letters to CURL. It did not however greatly succeed. It was intended to ridicule generally an absurd passion for virtû, but it was so confined to the great, who are too callous to feel attacks of this kind, that it was no further useful to the author's reputation than to shew that he could write, and that he was capable of attacking whatever might be the reigning folly.

The *Englishman in Paris*, 1753, is a farce of considerable merit. The characters are natural, the plot is interesting, and the drift is laudable. Had FOOTE uniformly kept to this species of writing, he would certainly have established a legitimate reputation. In his next piece, *The Knights*, he began to indulge his favourite propensity by personating a peculiar character whom he had the supreme felicity of rendering ridiculous in his neighbourhood, where till then he had been respected and beloved, and

had never, till the exhibition of this exaggerated portrait, been suspected of possessing any follies but what were perfectly harmless and inoffensive and in common with those of his neighbours and friends.

The *Englishman returned from Paris*, is a piece of a better kind. It is general and has good discrimination. It is also remarkable for a peculiar neat diction that FOOTE had a good knack of writing. He had, however, perpetually the contrary fault, and having filled his head with that short responsive dialogue, which, though tierce enough in the French, is flat and palling on the English stage, the ear was in his pieces too frequently tired with, "certainly, no doubt, granted", and a long string of other similar expressions which are repeated almost verbatim in every one of his plays.

The *Author*, one of FOOTE's outrageous personalities, was performed at Drury Lane in 1757. The gentleman mimicked in this piece and held up by FOOTE as an object for the hand of scorn to point its slow and moving finger at was a person of fortune not in any respect deserving of public or private reprehension for any breach of honour, liberality, or moral rectitude, but because he hap-



pened to have peculiarities. It would have been more to the honour of the satirist if his own peculiarities had been as little liable to reproach. The gentleman alluded to had interest enough to get the piece suppressed. The *Diversions of the Morning* was composed of *Taste* and other things.

The *Minor* was performed in 1760. This piece is full of personalities. We here begin to see in FOOTE a mixture of SHADWELL and FIELDING; from the first he had plenty of opportunity to take his bullies, and his bawds, and, if the latter ridiculed COCK, the auctioneer, FOOTE had nothing to do but retail the same materials in order to represent COCK's successor LANGFORD.

The drift of this piece, which it must be confessed is laudable enough, might have been brought about without any of these reprehensible vehicles. Profligacy, imposition, and hypocrisy are the proper objects of ridicule for the theatre; but why are particular characters held up as the only promulgators of these evils? If the hydra vice is to be destroyed by striking at a single bawd, a single auctioneer, and a single methodist, then is the labour no longer Herculean,

Every body knows that this was not the fact. Mother DOUGLAS, LANGFORD, and WHITEFIELD were laughed at, but wenching, tricking, and praying went on as before; and thus general reprobation was lost in personal ridicule, and the severity of the satirist eclipsed by the adroitness of the mimic.

The *Orators*, performed at the Haymarket in 1762, is a kind of acted illustration of the principles of oratory. It contains as usual many personalities, and was rendered celebrated by FOOTE's mimicking a well known Dublin printer, who had but one leg. The satirist little dreamt at that time that the personal defect, at least which he thought proper to expose to laughter, would one day be his own. The printer, when he caught him upon his own ground, trounced him severely; a Dublin jury not being of opinion that natural infirmities ought to be quietly sported with. Upon this occasion FOOTE wrote a Prologue in which he modestly procured himself to be called the English ARISTOPHANES.

The *Mayor of Garrat*, performed in 1763, is generally supposed to be in every respect original. This, however, is not true, as any one may be convinced who chuses to look at SHADWELL's *Epsom Wells*, where they will find Major Sturgeon, Jerry



Sneak, Bruin, and the two wives. The Major, who every body knew, talked of mustering up courage enough to cane the poet. No body would have been sorry if he had kept his word. These are all Foote's pieces within my present promise.

MACKLIN, whose writing was as harsh and as hard as his conduct was rude and dogmatic, who, though he did not produce many pieces, contrived to make one answer the purpose of many, whose strange peculiarities made him a torment to himself and to every body else, was, however, a useful and sometimes a great actor, and very far from an inferior author.

MACKLIN's first piece was *Henry the Seventh, or the Popish Impostor*. It appeared at Drury Lane the year that GARRICK performed at Covent Garden. The second title of this piece is a misnomer, for the story is that of *Perkin Warbeck*, which we have seen treated unsuccessfully before, and a man could not be said to be an impostor by professing the established religion. It was, however, in every respect faulty and universally rejected. MACKLIN's friends are solicitous to retrieve his fame by the stale excuse that it was done in a hurry, to which they add that his employment as manager prevented him

from paying it the private attention it ought to have received. In the first place, if he did not take time enough he ought to have found more, and in the second, he was not manager in that year, LACEY being then in that capacity and proprietor as we have seen with GREEN and AMBER.

*A Will or no Will* has been frequently acted for MACKLIN's benefit but never was considered of consequence enough to be regularly brought forward. The *Suspicious Husband Critized*, is of course an invidious thing. The play it was meant to ridicule standing deservedly high in the public opinion. It had but little success, yet more than it merited. The *Fortune Hunters* never was performed except three or four different times at the author's benefits. *Covent Garden Theatre, or Peter Pasquin turned Drawcanfir*. Up to this period we find MACKLIN nothing more than an imitator of FIELDING. His performances were temporary, and principally a ridicule on theatres and plays, naturally poor and unprofitable to the fame of an author.

*Love Alamode* was performed at Drury Lane in 1760. This piece, though heaven knows it has no superior traits of genius or talents, made the author a little fortune. When it came out, it was strongly



supported and strongly opposed. Its partizans, however, at length got the better, and this victory gave the farce an admitted consequence it certainly did not critically deserve. The story has been fifty times gone over, and the denouement has always been the same in fact, though never so bad in effect as in *Love Alamode*. To make a needy Irishman the only disinterested lover of a lady apparently without fortune is certainly a little too much upon the brogue, especially when this Irishman is the nephew of the lady's guardian, who would certainly, both naturally and theatrically speaking, have let him into the secret.

This farce, owing to a number of adventitious circumstances, had great success, and this created a report, naturally enough, that MACKLIN was not the author of it, which, according to custom, though every body knew the contrary, was at one time pretty generally believed. The report itself is not so extraordinary as that with all his sourness and irascibility he had the good sense to treat it with contempt.

The *Married Libertine* was performed at Covent Garden in 1761. It was very strongly opposed during its run, which was no more than nine nights. The contest relative to this play was like that which

distinguished *Love Alamode*. It did not, however, terminate so fortunately. The author was as strenuously supported by his countrymen, who remembered their triumph in favour of Little Ireland and Sir Callaghan, but the merits were universally allowed not to bear them out; the distinction, however, was not correct. As FOOTE's characters were notoriously held out to ridicule some person well known, so the public gave MACKLIN the credit, or rather the obloquy, of intending by his some person the idea of whom had never entered his imagination, and thus, as the supposed personification of Lord BUTE had created a host of friends and enemies in Sir Archy, so here the character of Lord Belleville was supposed to imply a married nobleman whose intrigues at that time were pretty notorious. The *Married Libertine* has never since been resumed, though it certainly had more merit than *Love Ala Mode*.

MURPHY, an author of merited celebrity, who has written tragedy, comedy, and farce, with fair and legitimate pretensions to fame, an extent of dramatic talents very rarely concentrated in one writer, comes next into consideration, and I am pleased to acknowledge that the repugnance naturally arising from an unwillingness to give pain to living authors



will in this instance yield to the pleasure of recording truth and praise in the same delineation.

With the different pursuits of Mr. MURPHY I have nothing to do. Biographers of the living have at best an awkward task to perform, and it is therefore seldom attempted with success but by the illiberal and the malignant, who are as sure to find readers in those whose minds are congenial to their own as they are to be spurned and execrated by men of candour, generosity, and judgment.

Mr. MURPHY was intended for business, has been a party man, was an actor, a dramatic writer, and at length a barrister, about which a great deal has been said; but how any part of it can, as fact, tell to his disadvantage is beyond the admission of my capacity. All professions are honourable, if they are honourably borne; but the *ipse dixit* of CHURCHIL have found their low and dirty level, and it would be well for the societies of the Inns of Court if they never had admitted among them men whose pursuits had been more dishonourable than those who have followed the profession of an actor.

MURPHY's first piece was the *Apprentice*, 1756, a farce so well known and so generally approved

that every reader can anticipate a description of it. I shall, therefore, say that, being his first attempt, it gave good proof of that coming dramatic reputation which this author has so ably established. The *Spouter, or the Triple Revenge*, is a strange piece in which GARRICK, RICH, and young CIBBER, connived at being ridiculed. It seems to have been one of those left handed whims of GARRICK, like *The Sick Monkey*, to anticipate ridicule, which, perhaps, would never have been conceived but in his own imagination. It had no success. The *Englishman from Paris*, which was performed in 1756 only a single night, and to which MURPHY spoke the Prologue, was, of course, the subject of FOOTE's *Englishman returned from Paris*, to which latter the town gave the preference.

The *Upholsterer*. This piece, which has been so long and so deservedly a favourite, was originally performed for Mossop's benefit, but was found to possess so much merit that the managers very gladly admitted it among their stock performances. The hint is taken from the *Spectator*, and is most completely to the very purpose of farce; a discrimination which was peculiarly the talent of MURPHY.

We now come to this author's first tragedy, which was *The Orphan of China*. The original story



of this play is to be met with in DU HALDE's History of China, which VOLTAIRE had wrought into a tragedy, and of which I have already spoken. MURPHY's play is an alteration of VOLTAIRE, with an eye, perhaps, to the *Heraclius* of CORNEILLE. It was certainly judicious to bring forward the Orphan and make him a principal character in the piece, but it has given it, therefore, a resemblance to *Merope*, and those numerous tragedies of the same complexion.

This piece, notwithstanding GARRICK's incomparable acting, and the opportunity it gave of displaying the valuable merits of Mrs. YATES, and other adventitious circumstances, did not certainly succeed to the degree its merits had promised, for which a variety of reasons have been given, and one of them of a curious and private nature relative to a pique taken absurdly by GARRICK, in consequence of a political transaction but I apprehend it principally arose, for these circumstances are generally easily traceable, from this play being considered a sort of innovation on tragedy, and consisting of pompous and poetic, rather than affecting and interesting language, and depicting great rather than natural manners. There may be too much truth in this last

observation, and perhaps it obtains too generally in MURPHY, but the opportunities this has given to call forth great and transcendant powers in actors have made ample amends, as far as it respects the general advantage of the theatre, no dramatic author, in our recollection, having given additional lustre to the merits of more various and eminent performers.

The *Desart Island*, 1760. This piece, which is taken from *Metastasio*, is better written, that is to say with more nature, than this author's serious pieces in general. It is, however, too barren of incident. The *Way to Keep Him* accompanied this piece; they were each written in three acts and intended to make up the same evening's entertainment, a mode of introduction that has seldom succeeded. The *Desert Island* was soon withdrawn, and the author, by adding two acts to *The Way to Keep Him*, gave it a permanent right to keep the stage.

*The Way to Keep Him* is certainly a play of considerable merit; its bent and drift are truly praise worthy, and it is in many respects a kind of improvement upon CIBBER. It is curious to remark that the critics decided, when it was performed in three acts, that it was imperfect; and, when it was extended to five, that the addition had spoiled a perfect



piece. The new character of Sir Bashful Constant, was also settled both to be totally out of nature and to be the actual portrait of a person then living. That Sir Bashful is not out of nature will, I believe, be easily granted, and as to the other assertion, it cannot be truth, unless the person alluded to was both an Englishman and a native of France, for the character and a good deal of the conduct are taken from a play of LA CHAUSSEE.

*All in the Wrong* was brought out in 1761, at Drury Lane, during the summer season, at which time FOOTE, MURPHY, and YATES, had the theatre to themselves, a plan, which GARRICK well knew would come to nothing, and that he should get the pieces then produced upon easy terms, several of which were intended to have been brought forward. None however, was actually produced, except those of MURPHY, and one written by BENTLEY, which we shall see in its place called *The Wishes, or Harlequin's Mouth Opened*.

MURPHY was a most powerful ally in this confederacy. *All in the Wrong*, a play which has been long a deserving favourite, had in it as much of stage bustle and perplexity as any piece that ever appeared; and, as it was intended to ridicule a na-

tural though absurd passion at all points, and in every possible view, it certainly exhibited a most happy combination of circumstances by no means too strong, for what is there extravagant that jealousy will not fancy, and gave that inveterate folly a violent correction which alone can master its own irritability.

If the knot of circumstances in *All in the Wrong* had been as ingeniously untied as it was knit together, no candid critic could have found in it any thing to cavil at. As to the objection that has been generally made to MURPHY'S comedies, that they have not the wit of CONGRIEVE and VANBRUGH, the answer is that they have then more nature, for indeed quibble and point is not the common language of mankind, and in particular when the passions are busily at work it is a stronger proof of nature to consult the heart, than the head; from one the language comes measured and cold, from the other intuitive and animated.

The *Old Maid* was performed the same summer. It contains a series of pleasant circumstances occasioned by a simple and natural equivocation, a mode of conveying comic humour of the best kind when it is rationally treated, but of the most monstrous



and burlesque when violently caricatured. The stage is too much a stranger to this species of after-piece. Every thing in *The Old Maid* is just, happy, full of effect, and managed with a nice and penetrating discrimination that are highly creditable to the author; upon the whole there is scarcely any piece upon the stage more perfect in its way. The resemblance it bears to *L'Etourderie*, of FAGAN, is only that fair advantage of which every author has a right to avail himself,

The *Citizen*, which was also performed in the summer of 1761, and which brought Miss ELLIOT on the stage, has proved of considerable value to the theatre. Nothing is more sensible or more meritorious in managers than to strengthen their interest as to the half price. MURPHY was admirably well calculated to assist the theatre in this particular. When WOODWARD came from IRELAND, The *Citizen*, The *Upholsterer*, and The *Apprentice*, brought at half price a most incredible sum for at least three years, and no trifle for several years afterwards

The *Citizen* was well calculated to display the various merit of Miss ELLIOT, who certainly performed Maria incomparably; and, though there is

some extravagance in the conduct, the drift is laudable, and the circumstances are natural. The scene which the author pretends to cover by giving an idea that it is an imitation of *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, is *The Fausse Agnes* of DESTOUCHES, even to the *oui Monsieur*, which has always so good an effect. There is, however, no harm in this. Every author has a right to imitate whatever he is capable of improving.

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## CHAP. VIII.

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YOUNG, MALLET, DODSLEY, BROOKE, WILLIAM  
SHIRLEY, AND OTHERS.

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THE works of the authors now under consideration do not by any means militate against my declaration as to the inconsiderable number of celebrated dramatic pieces during the first sixteen years of GARRICK'S reign, most of their productions, as will appear, having seen the world before the year 1741; but, as part of them were brought forward after that period, I thought it best to give the whole in one view.

YOUNG, whose great character was singularity, who seems in the course of his life to have been constant to all the virtues and vices, and like Captain PLUME with his fifteen attachments never melancholy for one, whose writings are in places trite and in others sublime, who had great natural requisites, but who seems ambitious to be considered more as an uncommon than an original poet, wrote

three tragedies, one of which is well known to the public.

*Busiris* 1719, like most of YOUNG's works is an original conception of its author, who seems every where to have introduced characters which he knew from the beginning he should not know how to dispose of at last, and, therefore, he calls in the assistance of a dagger to get rid of them. *Busiris* is high and sounding, but has no means of access to the heart.

The *Revenge* is well known, because it has been by some considered as an improvement on *Othello*, Zanga's revenge being held up as more natural and more equitable than that of Iago; but this would be to make a virtue of revenge and to tolerate murder. It is ridiculous to compare the probable or the moral propriety of the two pieces upon this point. *Othello* trusts a man whom he had loaded with benefits, and on whose gratitude he has every right to repose. Alonzo confides his soul to a proud African Prince, his slave, whose nature he must know, if he knew any thing, was vindictive malignity; and as if it was not enough to submit his senses to the controul of such a mind, he does all this with his eyes open, for he is conscious of having dealt this gloomy and im-



placable Moor a blow, which indelible stain and disgrace he would infallibly wipe off with his blood, after having reproached him with his folly and weakness in having listened to him.

As to the causes of jealousy they are infinitely pre-eminent on the side of SHAKESPEAR, whose trifles, light as air, blind suspicion, while forged letters, pictures, and such gross and palpable evidence would detect the villain in the mind of any man above an idiot, and a driveller. In short, the plot cannot be defended except by those who are mad enough to maintain that a family ought to be destroyed for a fancied injury, that the revenge of Zanga, which supersedes law, justice, and morality, may be tolerated, and that the folly and stupidity of Alonzo deserves an exemplary punishment. There are certainly passages of considerable merit in the play; for, whoever YOUNG has imitated, the writing is his own, which it is too little to say is greatly above Mrs. BEHN, and it would be too much to say that it is any thing equal to SHAKESPEAR.

Of the tragedy of *The Brothers*, Dr. JOHNSON tells us the world has said nothing, and therefore he may be allowed the same indulgence. One author

has, however, said a great deal of it; and, after going into an elaborate and general account of its merits, he tries to prove his assertion by saying that the author nobly gave up the profits for the propagation of the gospel in foreign parts. YOUNG has been said to have written with the energy of DRYDEN, but the only resemblance between them seems to be, that YOUNG dedicated the *Revenge* to the infamous WHARTON, and DRYDEN his *Marriage a la Mode* to WHARTON's infamous relation ROCHESTER.

MALLET, a writer with more cunning than genius, who courted the great to better purposes than authors in general are able to do, and whom JOHNSON has, meanly for himself, stigmatized in his Dictionary in his etymology of the word *alias* \*, wrote

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\* This curious instance of deliberate malevolence ought be noticed. JOHNSON and MALLET were together looking at the wild beasts in the Tower, and MALLET observed, as they were noticing the uncouthness of a Greenland bear, that it had strong resemblance to JOHNSON, remarking dryly that he did not know which was the handsomest, the bear or the doctor. JOHNSON did not chuse to resent the matter upon the spot, but laid up this injury in his mind, with a determination to take public revenge. Accordingly, when he compiled his Dictionary, having occasion to explain the etymology of the term *alias*, he gives it the following construction. It should be observed that MALLET's real name was MALLOOH, and the doctor, of course, concluded that he had some particular reason for



several things of different descriptions and the following pieces for the theatre.

*Euridice* is a weak tragedy and never had reputable success, though strengthened by the performance of GARRICK and Mrs. CIBBER, when it was revived in 1760. It originally appeared in 1731. *Mustapha*, a subject treated before by Lord ORRERY and Lord BROOK, was probably written by MALLET to shew his attention to noble writers. It had better success than *Euridice*, but not enough to satisfy any author of reputation. *Alfred* was originally performed in 1740, at the Gardens at Cliefdon, in commemoration of the accession of GEORGE the first, and in 1751 at Drury Lane\*, at which time it had undergone considerable alterations and had success, great part of which, however, was ascribable to the beautiful music of ARNE. THOMPSON had a hand in this piece.

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concealing it. "Alias," says he, "is a Latin word signifying other-wife; as Mallet, alias Malloch; that is, otherwise Malloch."

\* We are told from good authority that MALLET procured *Alfred* to be performed at Drury Lane by insinuating to GARRICK that in his Life of MARLBOROUGH he should, by an ingenious device find a niche for the hero of the stage. "My dear friend," said GARRICK, "have you left off to write for the stage?" The hint was taken, and *Alfred* was produced.

*Britannia*, in which there is some charming music by ARNE, had good success, chiefly owing, however to a prologue that GARRICK spoke in the character of a drunken sailor. *Elvira*, 1763. This is MALLET's best dramatic production, but it had little success notwithstanding GARRICK, whom MALLET seems to have known how to manage, did his utmost for it. It however contained unpopular sentiments and could not resist the opposition that was made to it.

DODSLEY, who by his industry and his ingenuity was of great use to the cause of the theatre, and indeed of literature in general, and who by his modesty and good sense preserved a respectable reputation, and accomplished the difficult task of conciliating the favour of many friends, wrote the following pieces.

The *Toyshop*, which is one of those various dramas that have originated from RANDOLPH's *Muses Looking Glass*, and which good naturedly rebukes fashionable follies. In short it is FOOTE's piece called *Taste* with all its points, and none of its asperity. It was performed at Covent Garden in 1735 with good success. The *King and the Miller of Mansfield*, a pleasant and well known farce, which was afterwards translated into French by SEDAINÉ,



the music by MONSIGNY, with most extraordinary success, is founded on a traditional story in the reign of HENRY the second. It has ever been deservedly a favourite. *Sir John Cockle at Court*, also has merit but has the disadvantage of all sequels. The circumstance, however, of making a man of plain integrity resist the corruption of a court is certainly a fair object for a dramatic pen.

The *Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green* is an unhappy subject. It did not succeed. *Rex et Pontifex* is only known in a volume of DODSLEY's works modestly called *Trifles*. *Cleone*, is a tragedy of some merit. It had great success which was principally owing, however, to the acting of Mrs. BELLAMY, who certainly was never in any other character so excellent. It is, however unaffected, and pathetic, and the interest is in many places strong and home to the heart.

BROOKE, who was a respectable though by no means a first rate author, wrote fifteen dramatic pieces generally with indifferent success. In his writings is diffused a turbulent spirit of liberty, which may serve party purposes, but ought not to pervade theatrical productions. *Gustavus Vasa* was prohibited, but a subscription of a thousand pounds

made the author amends. The piece was afterwards performed on the Irish stage with alterations. The *Earl of Westmoreland* was performed in IRELAND with success. *Jack the Giant Killer* was interdicted, though performed in IRELAND.

The *Earl of Essex* is well written in places, but the public gave the preference to the play of BANKS on this subject for the reasons we have already seen \*.

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\* This play would scarcely be known but for a strange thing said by Dr. JOHNSON about it. which without examination passed so implicitly for sterling reason, that even the author consented to alter the line which is reprobated by the remark. JOHNSON is said to have been solicitous to have a specimen of BROOKE's language, and Mr. SHERIDAN repeated to him the line at the end of the first act which runs thus,

Who rule o'er freemen should themselves be free.

The Doctor's answer was that it would be as proper to say,

Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat,

Than which nothing can be more false, either literally or figuratively. It so happens that nothing can be better or more just than the sentiment of BROOKE, though perhaps bunglingly expressed. He alone is proper to rule over freemen who in his heart feels and cherishes the principles of freedom. What is there amiss in the clear and obvious truth this conveys? Were this principle of argument carried on in the sentiment of JOHNSON it would mean, if it were intended to mean any thing, that the drover must not only be corpulent which would be an impediment to his driving oxen, but fit for killing,



*Antony and Cleopatra, The Impostor, Cymbeline, Montezuma, The Vestal Virgin, The Contending Brothers, The Charitable Association, The Female Officer, The Marriage Contract, and Ruth*, make up the number of this author's plays. They are all imitations or alterations of other writers as may be seen by their titles, but they were never performed.

WILLIAM SHIRLEY, an excellent calculator, except as to the merit of dramatic productions, wrote a string of pieces, the reception of which tolerably well proves my assertion. The *Paricide* was performed once and undeservedly damned, if we may credit the author's dedication of it to RICH. King *Pepin's Campaign*, was short and unsuccessful. *Edward the Black Prince*, an awkward attempt at an imitation of SHAKESPEAR, was the third misfortune that befel this author on his dramatic road. *Electra* was as unfortunate an imitation of SOPHOCLES as *Edward* had been of SHAKESPEAR. It had a more

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which is a quality necessary in the oxen, but not in the drover, because men eat oxen, but not drovers. Nay, it is false, list it how you may. The original position is wrong. Freemen may be ruled and led, but they cannot be driven; but it would be folly to pursue it any further. I shall therefore only add that this was one of those instances in which JOHNSON found it easier to knock down his auditors than to convince them.

merciful exit, for the Lord Chamberlain interdicted it, and therefore the author was less exposed.

The *Birth of Hercules* was written immediately after *Artaxerxes*, and composed by ARNE. It was rehearsed but never performed. The music was extremely beautiful, but it would not probably have succeeded; it was not dramatic. The songs composed for BEARD, TENDUCCI, PERETTI, and Miss BRENT, were of the first excellence. I was present at the rehearsal and their effect will never be erased from my memory. It was withdrawn, as it was generally understood, through some caprice of the author. The *Roman Sacrifice*, the last of this author's plays that appeared on the stage, was, however, only performed four nights. the remainder of the list which were printed but never otherwise produced, were the *Roman Victim*, *Alcibiades*, *The First and Second Parts of Henry the Second*, *The Fall of Carthage*, *All Mistaken*, *The Good Englishman*, *Fashionable Friendship*, *The Shepherd's Courtship*, and *Hecate's Prophecy*.

WORSDALE, a painter and a mimic, and rather a retainer to authors than an author himself, and in particular the Jackall of the Lion POPE \*, was an

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\* "The circumstance relative to POPE's Letters, which are hinted



apprentice to Sir GODFREY KNELLER, and turned out of his master's house for marrying the knight's niece. He was a facecious good natured fellow, and author of many trifling productions, in short a kind of second DURFEY. His dramatic pieces are *A Cure for a Scold*, which is SHAKESPEAR'S *Taming of the Shrew*, made very unsuccessfully into a ballad opera. The *Assembly*, which had no merit but his own admirable performance of an old woman, The *Queen of Spain*, which was probably a burlesque, The *Extravagant Justice*, known only by name, and *Gasconade the Great*, intended as a laugh at the partiality of the King of FRANCE to Madame de POMPADOUR.

HAVARD, a respectable actor, and a reputable

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at already, was briefly thus, and managed with consummate art. It did not succeed. POPE privately employed JEMMY WORSDALE to carry spurious copies of his letters both to LINTOT and CURL. neither of whom, as the letters did not come authenticated by the author, would treat for them. This was the very thing POPE wanted; for it now appeared certain that if something were not done his correspondence would be laid before the public surreptitiously. It behoved him, awkward as the circumstance was, to sound his own trumpet. Thus—if I may be allowed the expression—he submitted to the public, with great deference, his own posthumous works; and thus did he cheat that very posterity whose favour he had made it the business of his life to conciliate.

character, wrote *Scanderbeg*, founded upon LILLO's *Christian Hero*, which had little success. *King Charles the First*, did credit to the author and the stage, but LORD CHESTERFIELD's remark on it in his famous speech against the licencing act was that it was of too recent, too melancholy, and too solemn a nature to be heard of any where but in a pulpit; *Regulus*, has some sterling merit, but it had but little success, *The Elopement*, a mere farce, was acted only at his benefit.

MARSH, who was at different times a parish clerk, a bookseller, and a Westminster justice, and who fancied himself an author, wrote a miserable piece called *Amasis, King of Egypt*, performed one night only in the Haymarket; and altered, from SHAKESPEAR, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, neither of which, so altered, was ever performed at all. ARTHUR, the actor, wrote *The Lucky Discovery*, merely to assist his benefit.

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## CHAP. IX.

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THE HOADLYS, WHITEHEAD, JOHNSON, MOORE,  
AND OTHER AUTHORS TO 1763.

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DR. BENJAMIN HOADLY, the eldest son of the celebrated bishop of Winchester, was a physician of considerable eminence, and, in addition to other ingenious productions, wrote the well known and greatly admired comedy of *The Suspicious Husband*. This was one of the first novelties that GARRICK brought out after he had possession of the management. It certainly has great intrinsic merit as every body knows; much of which, however, was owing to GARRICK's judicious advice and assistance during its preparation for the stage, which he gave very honestly, and which was permitted with even deference by HOADLY; who, admirable as he was in his various writings upon grave subjects, found great judgment and knowledge in the alterations made by his friend, who in particular modelled *Ranger* to his own manner, and afterwards performed it incomparably.

Dr. JOHN HOADLY, brother of BENJAMIN who had also a hand in writing the *Suspicious Husband*, which was originally intended to be called *The Rake*, wrote several dramatic pieces \*.

The *Contrast* was written by the Chancellor, with the assistance of his brother BENJAMIN, indeed they seldom wrote upon any subject without consulting each other. The design of this piece was to ridicule the poets of that day, but the bishop their father, thinking the subject too ludicrous to be treated by his sons, prevailed upon them to withdraw it. It however had been played five times before this

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\* I had the honour of receiving a great deal of attention from this gentleman in the early part of my life, when he was Chancellor of Winchester, Rector of St. Mary, at Southampton, and held all those other places of immunity that might naturally be in the possession of the bishop of Winchester's son, and, having met him frequently afterwards at GARRICK's house at Hampton, at the time I was one of his privy counsel, I have been present at conversations wherein, with all the playfulness of a boy, though he was then tormented with the gout and obliged to be wheeled from room to room in one of MERLIN's chairs, who was at that time newly arrived among us, those pranks which he, GARRICK, and HOGARTH played together were reiterated. He delighted in the theatre though an exemplary divine, and, though he knew how to treat serious subjects with proper strength of understanding and due solemnity, he loved a jest in his soul. His wit, however, was of the best kind; for, though it was irresistible, it never gave a moment's pain on reflection to him or his hearers.



mandate, and with great applause. The subject did not die for FIELDING afterwards modelled his *Pasquin* after it.

*Jephtha* was an oratorio, *Love's Revenge* an opera, so was *Phæbe*, so was *The Force of Truth*, Doctor GREENE was the composer of these operas. HOADLY would have written other pieces for the stage if he had not been restrained by the entreaties of his father, who with great paternal regard had studied to make his means honourable and ample. He dabbled, however, a great deal in private, and, among other efforts, he revised LILLO's *Arden of Feversham*, wrote a tragedy called *Cromwell*, and planned a farce called *The Housekeeper*, on the subject of *High Life below Stairs*, something relative to which I privately know; but, as much of my knowledge of the stage during the seven years I was articulated to GARRICK, is derived from confidential conversation, it would be a weak way of recommending one species of veracity by violating another. I shall withhold nothing, however that I may fairly communicate.

WHITEHEAD, who held the situation of poet laureat for many years, with considerable ability, wrote *The Roman Father*, a tragedy that has borne

a good rank on the theatre. It is confessedly taken from CORNEILLE, and except in one or two respects materially mended. It appeared in 1750. *Fatal Constancy* was a mere sketch given to eke out FOOTE'S *Diversions of the Morning*. *Creusa*, which is founded on the *Ion* of Euripides, and in which WHITEHEAD has introduced with great effect a youth bred up in the service of the gods, and kept unacquainted with the vices of mankind, was performed at Drury Lane in 1754. It was, however, too lofty and classical for general effect.

The *School for Lovers*, though a respectable play came out to disadvantage after *The Guardian*. It was one of the first attempts at what was called sentimental comedy, which the French under the term *drame* have classed as superior in a moral sense to either tragedy or comedy; In ENGLAND it at last became a mere rhapsody of words. The play in question is by no means of this outrageous species; it is delicate, sensible, and to a degree impressive, but neither the situations nor the interest was found sufficiently powerful, notwithstanding it was admirably acted, to ensure it permanence. The *Trip to Scotland* was a passable farce and that was all. WHITEHEAD could not write ill but his attempts at comedy are rather sketches than pictures.



JOHNSON, who has written so many volumes himself, and filled so many volumes written by others, can only have a very small corner in this work, because he wrote but one play, and that an unsuccessful one. I could with no<sup>t</sup> great difficulty go largely into his literary character which I might be tempted to do were I not under an incumbent necessity of paying impartial attention to all those of whom I have undertaken to speak. The reflections resulting from this forbearance perhaps are pleasurable, for it is inconceivable how like the bundle of rushes he sinks more and more into insignificance upon our nearer acquaintance.

*Irene*, the only play of JOHNSON, was performed by GARRICK, BARRY, Mrs. CIBBER, Mrs. PRITCHARD, and all the strength of the company, and yet excited no extraordinary curiosity, or attracted any warmth of applause; for which the public taste has been arrogantly arraigned by the critics, though no dramatic piece was ever ushered into the world with more support and patronage. In short it was regular to preciseness, and verbose to dullness; and, what with the mixture of SENECA and ARISTOTLE that pervaded it, neither the critics, the author, or the actors could persuade the public that there can be any mode of delight and enjoy-

ment but that which the heart and the understanding approve.

MOORE, who knew how to feel as he wrote, the tendency of all whose productions was to cultivate truth and morality, and who, therefore, found it difficult to become a fashionable writer, brought out two comedies and a tragedy. The *Foundling* is a play of sterling merit. It breathes a good deal the air of MERCIER. It has, however, an unfortunate resemblance to *The Conscious Lovers* in the principal drift of the plot, and, therefore, though it has been often performed, and always with applause, yet it yields to STEELE's play what has certainly superior merit. This play was produced in 1748. In 1751 he brought out *Gil Blas*, which GARRICK said he had the highest opinion of before it came out, pre-facing his declaration, as he always did upon those occasions, with a confession that he had no eventual judgment, which was his way of bespeaking an indemnity whenever his opinion should turn out to be wrong. It was the story of Aurora in LE SAGE's novel which is difficult to be dramatized to effect\*.

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\* One cause of the failure of this piece was the exposition of a Spanish gentleman drunk on the stage, which was certainly a gross



The *Gamester* is exactly the *drame* of the French stage, except that it ends unhappily and thence becomes a tragedy in prose. From this distinction the *Gamester*, even though the audience were drowned in tears, obtained but a cold reception from the public; so reprehensibly does custom triumph over nature. Is it not extraordinary that the feelings dare not manifest themselves but by command, and that the affections of the mind are to halt till they receive the signal to march in measure and cadence? MOORE was aware of this prejudice, and therefore began his play in blank verse, the subject, however, was too touching, and the grief too natural to bear this heavy and unnatural garb. He threw it off and discovered under it one of the most perfect and beautiful ornaments of the theatre.

Another cause of its cool reception was a more

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violation of national manners, it being well known that nothing can be considered as a greater disgrace, a law having formerly existed that if a gentleman should be convicted of even a capital offence, he should be pardoned on pleading his having been intoxicated at the time he committed it; It being supposed that any one, with the sentiments of a gentleman, would rather suffer death than confess himself capable of so beastly a vice as drunkenness. It were a pity but the custom obtained in ENGLAND.

natural one. The audience could not bear to be touched on the side of that darling vice which the play reprobated. These considerations and the failure of *Gil Blas*, induced MOORE to persuade a gentleman to father it. The mask was thrown off after the fourth night; when, to shew what critics are, it was loudly condemned by many who had been its warm admirers while MOORE'S name was concealed.

SHERIDAN, an excellent actor, a man of strict honour, and a perfect gentleman, who, during part of a life of great credit and public utility, managed one of the theatres in Dublin, for the better purpose of conducting that kind of undertaking, wrote one dramatic piece, and altered three plays the productions of other authors. *Captain O'Blunder* was a mere juvenile *jeu d'esprit*, but it nevertheless became a great favourite on the Irish stage, and it was received as a model for all the Sir Callaghans, and other characters of that description, which have added so much pleasantry to the stage. The *Loyal Subject*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, were only altered in that slight degree which a revival of plays sometimes makes necessary, and *Coriolanus*, the last piece this gentleman was concerned in was a mixture of SHAKESPEAR and THOMPSON, and brought for-



ward at Covent Garden with the addition of a grand ovation.

MENDEZ, who though a rich Jew was no churl, for he was a *bon vivant* and a wit, wrote a farce called *The Double Disappointment*, which was a pleasant thing and a great favourite, *The Chaplet*, so exquisitely set by BOYCE, that it, perhaps, contains some of the sweetest and most delightful specimens of simplicity in music that can be conceived, was greatly to the honour of English taste eminently successful. *The Shepherd's Lottery* also succeeded, but not in the same degree. These pieces are by no means excellently written, but there is enough in them to set such a composer as BOYCE properly to work, and he has made such use of the opportunity that these are some of the proofs that music to perfection has been produced by English composers, and tasted by English auditors.

SMOLLET, with whose various publications the public are so well acquainted, wrote more for his amusement than for fame. *The Regicide*. This play was refused, the particulars of which circumstance SMOLLET has pleasantly but severely treated in *Roderick Random*. He was remunerated by a subscription. *The Reprisals* is a farce full of broad

humour, which, as every body knows, had great success at the theatres, at Bartholomew Fair, and every where else. There is also a piece set down to this author called *The Israelite, or the Pampered Nabob*.

GLOVER the ingenious author of *Leonidas*, wrote a tragedy called *Boadicea*, which, however it may be full of the scholar and the poet, has very little in it of the dramatist. Its merits have been discussed at large, and bishop HERRING has very sensibly distinguished its beauties and its faults. *Medea* has less pretensions as a tragedy than *Boadicea*. It was written after the Grecian model, and too full of preciseness and regularity for a chance of success.

HILL, who was an excentric author of so voluminous a kind that nothing came amiss to him, who, though he begged to be excused as to the quality of writing, beat out of sight any author that had ever existed in point of quantity, seeming rather to have an ambition to be much than well read, produced, among the wonderful number of things he engaged in, three dramatic pieces. *Orpheus* was in RICH's hands while his pantomime, or rather THEOBALD's pantomime, was in preparation. In consequence of which, when the latter came out, HILL



publicly and falsely attacked RICH with great virulence for having stolen his piece, which slander RICH refuted by the testimony upon oath of several credible witnesses. The *Critical Minute* was acted one night only at Drury Lane. The *Rout*, was still a more contemptible piece. It occasioned from GARRICK the following distich:

For phyfic and farces, his equal there scarce is,  
His farces are phyfic, his phyfic a farce is.

The pieces of inferior authors were The *False Guardian Outwitted*, by GODSHALL, perhaps never performed. The *Raree Shew*, by PETERSON, a strolling actor, *Antiochus*, by SCHUCKBOROUGH, The *Sharpers*, and The *Parthian Hero* by GARDINER, which were probably performed in IRELAND, as well as The *Preceptor of HAMMOND*, *Herod the Great*, written by PECK, *Arminius*, by PATERSON, the friend and successor in office of THOMPSON, *Rosalind*, and *David's Lamentation*, by LOCKMAN, secretary to the British Herring Fishery, says his biographer, and one of the compilers of the General Dictionary, *Orpheus and Euridice*, neither HILL's nor RICH's, by SOMNER, and *Sancho at Court*, and *The Kiss Accepted and Returned*, by AYRE, and *Amintas*, from TASSO, by AYRES.

WEST, an excellent writer, produced The *Insti-*

*tution of the Garter*, which was not known to the stage till GARRICK dressed it out at Drury Lane. *Iphigenia in Taurus*, translated from EURIPIDES, and *The Triumph of the Gout*, from LUCIAN. MORRIS wrote a tragedy, never performed, called *Fatal Necessity*, *The School Boy's Mask* was written by SPATEMAN merely as a sort of school exercise. YARROW, an actor, wrote *Love at first Sight*, and *Trick for Trick*. The first piece a mere incident originally in Italian, afterwards in the *Magnifique*, and then in the *Busy Body*, and the other taken from the *Match in Newgate*, and Lord HARVEY wrote *Agrippina*, a tragedy which, however, was neither printed nor acted.

DELAMAINÉ produced *Love and Honour*, from VIRGIL; SOMMERVILLE translated *Alzira* from VOLTAIRE; JOHN THEOBALD translated VOLTAIRE'S *Merope*; STEVENS, rather a collector than a writer, produced *The Modern Wife*; CUTTS wrote *Rebellion Defeated*, in which he cuts but a poor figure; LYON, in a very lamb like way, produced *The Wrangling Lovers*; BROUGHTON, with the strength of his namesake, but with very little of the sweetness of a poet, produced *Hercules*, which was set to music by HANDEL; MAXWELL, a blind poet, and unfortunately a poor one, wrote *The Royal Captive*,



The *Loves of Prince Emilius and Louisa*, and The *Distressed Virgin*; these pieces were acted at York at different times to raise money for the author.

Dr. PATRICK, an usher of the Charter House School, and superintendant of HENDERIE'S Lexicon, and AINSWORTH'S Dictionary, translated all the comedies of TERENCE; BAILLIE, another doctor, not of divinity but of medicine, wrote The *Married Coquette*; HYLAND, a farmer, wrote The *Shipwreck*; CLANCY, an Irishman, brought out in Dublin, *Hernon*, a tragedy, and The *Sharper*, a comedy; the latter piece was noticed by SWIFT; MORELL, who was secretary to the Antiquarian Society, and one of the original writers in the Gentleman's Magazine, altered and fitted from MILTON, GAY, and other authors, many of those pieces, some sacred and some prophane, which HANDEL brought out under the titles of *Oratorios*. He also translated *Hecuba* from EURIPIDES, and *Prometheus in Chains* from ÆSCHYLUS; CUNNINGHAM, a poet and actor, whose pastoral writings are deservedly in estimation, brought out a farce at Dublin, called *Love in a Mist*. WINCOP wrote *Scanderbeg*. LAMBERT, a most admirable scene painter, published a thing called The *Wreckers*; it would have been a noble acquisition to the stage if his pen had been equal to his pencil.

Mrs. HOOPER wrote two tragedies, and one burlesque, though her pieces were all nearer the last denomination than she was aware of. Her tragedies were called *The Battle of Poitiers*, *The Cyclopædia*, and her burletta, *Queen Tragedy Restored*. Mrs. PILKINGTON, whose curious memoirs are in the usual style of those ladies who after the example of CIBBER have conceived it necessary to apology not for their lives but the manner in which they led them, wrote, among others of her excentricities, a thing quite in her own way, called *The Turkish Court*. HAWKIN's whose biographer tries to prove his talents by instancing that his father was a great crown lawyer, wrote *Henry and Rosamond*, and *The Siege of Aleppo*, and altered *Cymbeline*. The originals were never performed, and the alteration were damned.

MOSS, or MARRIOT, wrote a contemptible piece called *The General Lover*. WILDER, an Irish actor and manager, in order to be dabbling, brought out a piece from DANCOURT called *The Gentleman Gardener*. WOODWARD, another dabler, produced a furious number of things, some of them however, as they were on the subject of those pantomimes he brought out, were not so much amiss. The titles of these pieces, none of which had success but the



pantomimes, are *Tit for Tat*, *Queen Mab*, *A Lick at the Town*, *Harlequin Ranger*, *The Genii*, *Fortunatus*, *Proteus*, *Marplot in Lisbon*, altered from Mrs. CENT-LIVRE, *Mercury Harlequin*, *Harlequin Faustus*, *Harlequin's Jubilee*, *The Man's the Master*, and *The Seasons*.

HALLAM, that HALLAM whom MACKLIN killed behind the scenes, for which he took his trial and was acquitted at the Old Bailey, brought out at the French theatre, *L'Opera du Gueux*. BLAND produced a strange thing called *The Song of Solomon*. Mrs. CLIVE, the celebrated actrefs, produced now and then for her benefit some new or altered piece, flimzy enough, but set off by her admirable performance, *Bayes in Petticoats*, *Every Woman in her Humour*, *Sketch of a fine Lady's return from a Rout*, and *The Faithful Irishman* are her pieces of this description. STAMPER a pleasant creature and a sound actor, when he could be kept from the bottle, introduced a new character into *Æsop*.

Mrs. LEAPOR wrote a dismal tragedy called *The Unhappy Father*; GREENE published two plays, which were never acted, called *Oliver Crom-*

well, and *The Nice Lady*. FRANCIS, who was a good classical translator but a bad dramatic writer, produced *Eugene*, and *Constantine*, both tragedies. MRS. CIBBER, the celebrated actress, translated *The Oracle of St. Foix* with good success. GORDON translated the comedies of TERENCE. BOYCE, a *bon vivant* about town, who had a place in the South Sea house, whence have issued so many choice spirits, wrote a number of fugitive pieces, and a play called *The Rover*. HENDERSON, whom nobody seems to have known, though he has written a great deal, produced one dramatic piece called *Arfinoe*.

GEORGE ALEXANDER STEVENS, who, another DURFEY, was a *bon vivant* and a ready writer, who at pleasure could lug in the whole heathen mythology to electrify men into an admiration of poetry which they were too far gone critically to examine, wrote for the stage, *Distress upon Distress*, never performed, *The French Flogged*, damned in the theatre and transferred to Bartholomew Fair; *The Court of Alexander*, a wretched imitation of the style of O'HARA, wretchedly composed by the curiously celebrated Dr. FISHER, and *A Trip to Portsmouth*, a musical piece performed upon a temporary occasion at the Haymarket. This man has been ad-



mired by those who are now ashamed of their former judgment. He made a fortune by his Lecture upon Heads, which was considered as a work of merit but is now reflected on with contempt. He died, however, in indigence, and had been so pampered by false praise that he fancied himself to the last moment a greater writer than HOMER.

SMART, another dissipated promoter of midnight orgies, was a better writer than STEVENS, but not so solicitous to turn his excentric effusions to advantage. He had strong sensibility, and his fits of drunkenness brought him to a madhouse, where he is said to have completed a translation of the Psalms. He recovered however and published many pieces; but nothing could keep him from the most deplorable poverty. He wrote, for the stage, *The Grateful Fair*, and *The Judgement of Midas*, which are mock operas, and *Hannah*, an oratorio, a strange heavy thing strangely and heavily set by WORGAN. To the first of these pieces belong the following celebrated lines, whimsically describing a conflict between love, rage, and jealousy, which have been attributed to so many authors.

Thus, when a barber and a collier fight,  
The barber beats the luckless collier white;  
The lusty collier heaves his ponderous sack  
And, big with vengeance, beats the barber black;

In comes a brickdustman, with grime o'erspread,  
 And beats the collier, and the barber, red.  
 Black, red, and white, in various clouds are tost,  
 And, in the dust they raise, the combatants are lost.

ROLT, to whom SMART was indebted for his initiation into the mysteries of Bacchus, who was originally a hackney writer to an attorney, who had the modesty to publish Dr. AKENSIDE'S *Pleasures of Imagination* as his own work, and in his own name, who was concerned with SMART in the famous amusement called *Mother Midnight's Entertainment*, who was celebrated by his congenial friend CHURCHILL, and, in short, who lived and died in infamy and poverty, wrote *Eliza*, which was prohibited, *The Royal Shepherd*, which was composed by RUSH, and was one of those pieces which *Ar-taxerxes* engendered, and which LACEY so much encouraged to no purpose while GARRICK was in ITALY, as we shall presently see, and *Almena*, another thing of the same kind, which was composed by MICHAEL ARNE, and in which Miss WRIGHT, afterwards Mrs. ARNE, sung most beautifully.

De BOISSEY translated MOLIERE'S *Miser*. JONES wrote *The Earl of Essex*, and *The Heroine of the Cave*; the last was finished by HIFFERNAN. *The Earl of Essex* was popular for a time, but BANK'S play at last triumphed over all others on this sub-



ject, for the simple reason that feeling and sensibility are objects of superior attraction than any other requisites of tragedy. JONES's biographer is very angry with him for being a bricklayer, and insists upon it that it is impossible for persons of such a description to produce any writings of merit, a circumstance which probably the gentleman forgot when he extolled BEN JONSON above all other dramatic writers.

STAYLEY brought out, at Dublin, *The Court of Nassau*, and *The Rival Theatres*; neither of them, but for regularity, worth recording. DERRICK, who at the death of NASH became master of the ceremonies at Bath and Tunbridge, but who was so extravagant that no curb nor income was sufficient to keep him from distress, translated a piece, from the French of the king of Prussia, called *Sylla*. LEE, an actor, famous for sterling merit and unaccountable singularity, who in any situation was never at peace himself or would suffer any body else to be so, altered *Macbeth* most miserably, *The Country Girl* as bad, and *The Relapse* equal to either. MORGAN, an Irishman, wrote a romantic thing, which he called a tragedy, under the title of *Philoclea*. CRISP belonged to the custom house, and, about the time of the tobacco dispute with AMERICA, wrote a tragedy called *Virginia*. Miss FIELDING,

filter to the celebrated novelist, wrote a dramatic novel in three volumes called *The Cry*.

PRESTON, an itinerant actor, wrote a despicable piece which he called *The Rival Father*. Mrs. TOLLET produced *Susannah*. HART, a Scotchman, wrote a tragedy for the theatre of Edinburgh, called *Herminia and Espasia*. GOODHALL is said to have written *Florazene*, and to have altered *King Richard the Second*; very little, however, is known of him or his writings. BROWN, who was known as an ingenious author and a restless character, and who put a period to his existence from impatience of temper and extreme sensibility, produced a tragedy called *Athelstan*, certainly well conceived and well written, but ponderous and clogged, in consequence of which it met with a cold reception; *Barbarossa*, however, which was greatly received, is probably not so well written, and it is besides, too like *Merope* and other similar pieces. The performance however of GARRICK and MOSSOP, and the great solicitude with which GARRICK brought it forward, made it an object of profit, and, indeed, reputation to the author. BROWNE also wrote *The Cure of Saul*, which was composed by Dr. ARNOLD.

LEWIS, out of an inclination to make a total



change in the drama, and introduce every thing horrible, revolting, and dreadful, in the place of natural productions calculated to mend the heart and amuse the senses, wrote, for it was never performed, GARRICK was the wrong manager for his purpose, a most extraordinary piece upon the old theme of the *Italian Husband*, which RAVENCROFT, as we have seen, had before treated. I shall content myself with giving a specimen of the language, first noticing that, by way of catastrophe, the suspected lady is compelled to take an electuary composed of her supposed lover's vitals.

“ FORTIA. You know his lordship's bailiff GIOVANNI

“ Lives in a farm near to his castle gate.

“ Whilst he at dinner sat, a favourite hen

“ Came cackling, and at's feet lay'd a live chick,

“ Perfect with wings and claws, with eyes and voice,

“ Which ran without delay after its mother,

“ But lo! a greater wonder justly fills

“ All hearts with horror and amazement dire :

“ Just underneath the table th' earth gap'd wide

“ And did disclose a bubbling spring of blood,

“ Whence drops resulting sprinkled all the board.

“ Fix'd in suspense at this, one, from the cellar,

“ Ran and declar'd the wine was in a ferment,

“ Tho' fin'd before, and boil'd in every vessel,

“ As if set o'er a fire intense and large.

“ Mean while a serpent's carcase they beheld

“ Dragg'd out of doors, with eager haste, by weasels ;

“ A shepherd's bitch came gaping, from whose jaws

“ Leap'd forth a lively, large, tunbelly'd toad ;

“ A ram ran full against a dog spontaneous,  
“ And at one fatal stroke brake the dog's neck.”

We are not quite arrived to this ; but as ours is the age of improvement on nature, there is no saying what may happen in time.

MONCRIEF wrote a weak tragedy called *Appius*. The *Schemers* is a piece altered from MAYNE'S *City Match* by BROOMFIELD the surgeon. HILL, a poor bookseller, who tried the stage as an actor without success, wrote and altered four pieces ; they were called *The Spouter*, *Minorca*, *The Mirror*, and *The Frenchified Lady never in Paris*. BRENNAN is unknown by any work except a poor piece called *The Painter's Breakfast*. Mrs. HARRISON wrote a pompous piece called *The Death of Socrates*. SLADE, a lieutenant of marines, who was cast away in the *Ramilies*, wrote a play, which was performed one night by his friends, called *Love and Duty*. AVE-  
RAY, an obscure author, wrote *Britannia, and the Gods in Council*.

BACON wrote five pieces, almost totally unknown, called *The Taxes*, *The Insignificants*, *The Trial of the Time Killers*, *The Moral Quack*, and *The Occulist*. BARNARD produced two pieces, neither of which was intended for the stage, called *The*



*Somewhat*, and *Edward the Sixth*. FREE wrote *Jephtha*, an oratorio, set to music by STANLEY. THOMPSON, a clergyman, wrote a tragedy never performed, called *Gondibert and BIRTHA*. CLELAND, whose genius has procured for him an infamous immortality, and whose last moments, if he was capable of compunction, must have been imbittered with the reflection of having being the destroyer of morality in the youth of both sexes, produced three dramatic nondescripts, called *Tombo Chiqui*, *Titus Vespasian*, and *The Lover's Subscription*.

PORTAL, who was a jeweller, afterwards a bookseller, and at last a money taker at Drury Lane theatre, wrote for the stage *Olinda and Sophronia*, *The Indiscreet Lover*, and *The City of Bagdad*. Lord CORNBURY wrote *The Mistakes*. GORE published SHAKESPEAR'S *Henry the Eighth* with notes. BUSHE produced a piece, probably taken from VOLTAIRE, called *Socrates*. CHAPELLE altered *Anthony and Cleopatra* from SHAKESPEAR. MORTON wrote a piece called *The Register Office*, to do which he tells us he was induced to support a large family. As his piece was never performed except at Shrewsbury, I am afraid his family were not much the better for it.

TOWNLEY, master of merchant taylor's school, is said to have written *High Life below Stairs*. I know it has been ascribed to this gentleman, but the letter which at that time publicly appeared saying that this piece "is not written either by Mr. TOWNLEY or Mr. GARRICK," I can, if I may be guided by circumstances, undertake to say is truth. HOADLEY, had certainly a hand in it, and there were other communications from persons who were in the secret, but who conceived the subject to be rather ticklish. That GARRICK fitted it to the stage there can be no doubt. MOZEEEN, an indifferent actor, but by no means an insignificant writer, produced a piece called *The Heirefs*. WHITE translated *The Clouds* from ARISTOPHANES. I also reckon a hundred and twenty-five anonymous pieces since my last general account.

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## CHAP. X.

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ACTORS.

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THE dearth of great excellence in acting, from CIBBER's secession to the time of GARRICK's approach, gave me but little opportunity of going into that subject, and I now take it up merely to join the chain together, so that the reader's view of the comparative merit of actors may be collected and undisturbed.

Many of the actors and actresses ranked respectively, but that was all. Among these were, as we have seen, KEEN, MILWARD, the elder, and younger, MILLS, JOHNSON, BOWMAN, THURMOND, WALKER, WRIGHT, BULLOCK, and Mrs. BULLOCK, and others, most of whom were brought forward to ENGLAND from ASHBURY's nursery in IRELAND, which certainly promoted very materially the interest of the stage. The public, however, were

obliged to be content with these and a few more till the time of FLEETWOOD, when the later shoots from ASHBURY'S stock began to emancipate and expand in English soil.

From this time the English stage began to know, among many others, MACKLIN, QUIN, RYAN, DELANE, HULET, and afterwards SHERIDAN, DIGGES, SPARKS, BARRY, MOSSOP, and WOODWARD, among the men, and Mrs. BELLAMY, Mrs. CLIVE, and Mrs. WOFFINGTON, among the women; besides Mrs. CIBBER, and Mrs. PRITCHARD, and a large addition of names somewhat respectable though less eminent than those I have mentioned.

It seems to be evident that acting, having fallen off from the death of BOOTH and the secession of CIBBER, never regained its natural tone till the public saw a perfect model for imitation in GARRICK. MACKLIN was surely a turgid heavy actor, with neither real dignity in tragedy, nor native humour in comedy. There was a sort of precise studied correctness which always reached sufferance but seldom admiration, like a reader at a press, who goes critically over every word without feeling the sense of the sentiment, or the beauty of the writer. The acting, therefore, of that day must have been cold



and unnatural, for MACKLIN was the theatrical schoolmaster.

QUIN, though he must have been an actor of much greater understanding and more mind than MACKLIN, was still in stilts, and proved that though action comprehends the whole of oratory, oratory by no means comprehends the whole of acting. Greatness and dignity QUIN is universally allowed to have possessed; for a correct and commanding understanding, and a thorough and discriminating power of expressing the sense of an author, I have always understood he never had a superior. We are told, and I do not dispute the truth of the assertion, that his manner of utterance was so just and such a display of that feeling which the sentiment he pronounced conveyed to his mind, that he transfused an equal sensation of pleasure and conviction to his auditors.

This is surely transcendent merit, yet it is only transcendent as far as it goes; for it is but one requisite of a great actor; who, when he loses sight of the part he is performing, with all his reason, his understanding, and his judgment is no more than a performer lecturing his auditors. This actor's dignity was the dignity of QUIN, not of PYRRHUS, or

CATO; in other words, dignity of person, not dignity of mind, and I think we may easily conceive that BOOTH gave more force to the sentiment of CATO, by assuming the suavity of the philosopher, rather than the asperity of the cynic.

It is impossible to assert with certainty any thing positive on this subject; we can only assist our opinions by arguing rationally on such parts of it as we know to be infallible, and to form a conclusion from an impartial view of the whole. Upon this principle, with the perpetual objection in our teeth, fallacious however, that actors and their reputations die together, we can infallibly pronounce on the merit of ROSCIUS, BETTERTON, GARRICK, and others, who went for and accomplished a correct representation of nature, but we have no guide to lead us to the degree of merit possessed by theatrical readers, and oratorical actors, any further than to conceive that they conveyed the correctness of their authors without manifesting the beauty.

RYAN is spoken of in terms of the warmest praise by his biographer; who fancying himself obliged to write nevertheless in the language of candour, confesses, while he speaks of his person and features, as the model of symmetry and perfection,



that having first received a blow in the nose in one affray which turned it out of its place, and a brace of pistol bullets in his mouth in another which broke his jaw, these accidents so discomposed his voice that he became a most ridiculous object of imitation, but that he remained a very deserving stage favourite to the last.

It is universally acknowledged that he was a very sensible man, and a most respectable member of society, and upon this account he was probably encouraged greatly beyond his professional merit. Nobody seems to have known this better than QUIN; who in the most friendly manner, after he had retired from the stage performed Falstaff regularly for his benefit once a year, till he himself took a hint from nature and found that the deception would not do. In short in spite of whatever may be said by those who, from the best intentions in the world, wish well to the reputation of RYAN he never could have ranked on the stage as an actor of first rate abilities.

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\* There seems to have been a great deal of this philanthropy about QUIN. I cannot deny myself the pleasure of relating two anecdotes; which, though they are generally known, will not lose

DELANE was considered as a sound good actor of a respectable but by no means of a first rate description. He was particular and GARRICK successfully mimicked him in the *Rehearsal*. BOWMAN, however, we are told had merit enough to keep alive a spirit of jealousy in QUIN, though BOWMAN at that time was very old. HULET was a useful performer and a good singer. HARPER was a kind of a second to QUIN in comedy, and played Sir Epicure Mammon and other parts of that description with truth and spirit. CASHEL is said to have been a promising actor.

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upon repetition. When QUIN found himself admonished by age and infirmities not to appear again in public, he wrote to RYAN that he had the greatest regard for him as a friend, but that he would not whistle Falstaff for him or any man breathing, to which he added, that he had set him down a thousand pounds in his will, and if his occasions required it he was welcome to draw for the whole or any part of it during his life time. The other circumstance relates to THOMPSON, to whom QUIN is said to have introduced himself at a Spunging house, where he informed him, after a delicate and a proper introduction, that as he owed him two hundred pounds he thought he could not choose a more seasonable moment to pay his debts. THOMPSON remonstrated, but QUIN insisted upon the fact; and having prevailed upon THOMPSON to receive the money, which, probably, in that situation was not a very difficult task, he informed him that he had received pleasure from a perusal of *The Seasons* equivalent to the sum he had now reimbursed, a compliment more to his philanthropy than to his taste.



We have thus seen that QUIN, MACKLIN, and RYAN, had a smattering of CIBBER's school, the merits of which have been already canvassed, and which consisted more, except in the instances of chaste and natural representation in BOOTH and Mrs. OLDFIELD, and their imitators, of the art of acting than the power of demonstrating nature. With GARRICK came perfection; perhaps that perfection which is supposed to have died with BETTERTON; and I think it may fairly be conceived that even QUIN, afterwards, improved by that novel, because natural, system which at GARRICK's first appearance he had reprobated.

I have not ranked SHERIDAN with these; because, though a mannerist and a peculiar actor, yet he had no necessity to model himself upon the plan of any other performer, having as much genius and judgment as perhaps any one who ever trod the stage. It was not at all times that you would get at GARRICK's real sentiments about acting, which indeed was no more than the pardonable duplicity of a tradesman who is obliged now and then to be a little insincere to puff off his wares; but he had his unguarded moments, and through those I am able to ascertain that he had made it his business to avail himself of the sound sense and critical discrimination

which marked the judgment of SHERIDAN, and I can assert with safety, which is greatly to the honour of GARRICK, and a strong proof of his understanding, that he sought a connection with that scholar and critic, in uniting himself with him in the management of the Irish theatre, as much for the purpose of learning to act as learning to manage.

A sonorous voice, and an expressive face are very imposing requisites in favour of an actor; and where these are denied, the best understanding and the most critical conception are veiled and obscured. There is something, however, by which they announce themselves. We acknowledge the value of the sun even in a mist; though we do not at that time perceive its brilliancy nor feel its influence, we are only afflicted that nature should oppose such an inconvenient obstacle to what we decidedly know would otherwise be capable of affording a most complete and satisfactory enjoyment; on the contrary a meteor is a momentary object of delight; but our senses soon correct the fallacy and our admiration vanishes with the delusion that created it.

Nature had certainly thrown such impediments in the way of SHERIDAN, who, however, excited abundant admiration in those who were judicious enough to penetrate beyond the veil and view the



commanding power of mind and strength of comprehension with which he was internally gifted. In the powers of an actor, QUIN seems to have been superior to SHERIDAN, in the feelings of an actor, SHERIDAN appears to have been superior to QUIN. QUIN felt all he expressed, and therefore exceeded SHERIDAN, could SHERIDAN have expressed all he felt he would have soared above QUIN.

MOSSOP from all I can collect was a commanding but never an agreeable actor. There are various ways of convincing the mind. We are convinced by subtilty, by plausibility, by blandishment, and by eloquence, but we can also be convinced by perseverance, by confidence, by earnestness, and even by vehemence. These latter qualities seem to have been MOSSOP's mode of convincing an audience into an admiration of him which with all his pomp, his stiffness, his peculiarity and his affectation he contrived to bring about. I have heard MOSSOP praised for great and commanding powers in tragedy such as no other actor ever possessed, and it has been insisted that, if he was quaint and starched at times, he was at other times grand and energetic, and, indeed, that his influence over the feelings of his auditor was irresistible. The mind, however, is not very fond of being threatened into pleasure, nor are those confessions very sincere that are effected by

compulsion. We cannot, therefore, reasonably acquiesce in the opinions of either the admirers or disciples of Mossop. Profelytes are seldom gained by denunciations, nor do those scholars turn out brightest who have their educations hammered into them.

As the actors I have yet to name stood high in reputation after GARRICK'S return from ITALY, except HAVARD, BARRY, HIPPESEY, COLLINS, and some others, who certainly deserve to be spoken of with respect, but to whom it is impossible I should be expected to pay separate and particular attention, I shall mention those actresses who, up to the year sixty-three, ornamented the stage with a degree of reputation certainly upon the whole, putting GARRICK out of the question, superior to the men, and equal, but most probably exceeding those ladies of whom CIBBER seems to have written the eulogium.

Mrs. CIBBER was a most exquisite actress. In all characters of tenderness and pathos, in which the workings of the feeling mind call for the force of excessive sensibility, she was like GARRICK, the character she represented. Love, rage, resentment, pity, disdain, and all those gradations of the various passions she greatly felt and vigourously expressed. Her face, her figure, and her manner were irresistably impressive, and her voice was penetrating to ad-



miration. Actresses may have had more majesty, more fire, but I believe that all the tragic characters, truly feminine, greatly conceived, and highly written, had a superior representative in Mrs. CIBBER than in any other actresses. She was certainly not so happy in comedy, but it would be no bad compliment to the present day if there were any actresses who could perform it half so well.

Mrs. PRITCHARD was an actress of more general abilities than Mrs. CIBBER. Mrs. CIBBER's acting was delightful, Mrs. PRITCHARD's commanding. One insinuated herself into the heart, the other took possession of it. Nothing could be so fortunate for the stage as this junction of different talents. It made acting, like a picture with grand breadths of light and shade. We have seen the excellence of Mrs. CIBBER; that of Mrs. PRITCHARD was unceasing variety. Lady Macbeth, the Queen in *Hamlet*, Clarinda, Estifania, Doll Common, in short, every species of strong nature received from her a polish and a perfection than which nothing could be more truly captivating. CIBBER's judicious remark that the life of beauty is too short to form a complete actress, proved so true in relation to Mrs. PRITCHARD that she was seen to fresh admiration, till in advanced age she retired with a fortune to the great satisfaction of her numerous admirers.

Mrs. WOFFINGTON was an actress of a most extraordinary kind, and in some parts must have been unrivalled. She had a bad voice, but this seems to have been the only impediment to her becoming superlatively excellent; for though it is universally allowed to have prevented her from interesting the passions in so eminent a degree as either Mrs. CIBBER or Mrs. PRITCHARD, yet her superior beauty and grace, the industry with which she cultivated her profession by observing the instructions of CIBBER, getting introduced to Mademoiselle DUMESNIL, the attention she paid to GARRICK, and every other eligible opportunity to improve, which she seized with solicitude and avidity, established for her a solid and firm reputation. She is said in Cleopatra, Jane Shore, and Calista, and all other parts which require a form of commanding and majestic beauty, to have interested her auditors to a degree of astonishment. She also greatly excelled in many comic characters, but I cannot think it an addition to her fame, or to female delicacy, that the most prominent of those characters was Sir Harry Wildair. Resources are a bad specimen of great talents, and beauty like charity can hide defects.

Mrs. BELLAMY according to regularity comes next; but this sort of justice puts me out of my way, because the art of sinking is not more advanta-



geous to prose than to poetry. Mrs. BELLAMY, though an actress of considerable abilities, cannot be ranked with Mrs. CIBBER. In short in what I have seen, though it may, perhaps, be proper to rely with diffidence on my own opinion, yet I have a confirmed criterion in the recollection of those impressions that authors and actors have made upon their auditors; for, though in particular instances, where both are taken up from partiality and prejudice, such judgment may have deserved to have been arraigned, yet it is impossible upon reflection to mistake those decisions which feeling has excited and conviction confirmed.

Upon this principle we can say of Mrs. BELLAMY that she was natural, easy, chaste and impressive; that, as far as person, features, voice, and conception went, none of which were by any means of an inferior description, she highly pleased and never offended; but these commendations, respectable as they rank her, would be cold and negative applied to Mrs. CIBBER, or Mrs. PRITCHARD, who commanded attention, who seized the passions and modelled them at their will, but with all this deduction the public would be at this moment be a good deal astonished to see such an actress as Mrs. BELLAMY, were Mrs. SIDDONS out of the question.

- As I mean to bring into one view towards the

end of this work that prodigious assemblage of excellent acting, which was at its height some time after GARRICK'S return from ITALY, and has from that moment gradually declined, which opportunity will give me occasion to exhort the actors of the present day to look up to the few valuable vestiges which remain of that magnificent and ruined fabric, I shall close this book after I have said a few words of Mrs. CLIVE.

This performer, who fairly opened the book of nature, and pointed out every valuable passage to so good effect, that no actresses in her way has completely succeeded who has not trod in her steps, and traced her through all those fanciful paths to which she was conducted by the goddesses who delighted in her, had certainly most superlative merit. We have seen nothing succeed in her various styles of acting but what has been modelled after her. She created a sort of school of her own, in which Mrs. GREEN, Miss POPE, and their imitators, studied nature and effect; but this will be hereafter better exemplified when we see her at a time when she had perfected her scholars; to which period I shall defer this subject, to look after the opera, music in general, and other points relative to the theatre as well as to the conduct of both houses, during the theatrical interregnum.

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END OF THE NINTH BOOK.



THE  
**S T A G E.**

**BOOK X.**

FROM 1763 TO THE DEATH OF GARRICK.

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**CHAP. I.**

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**STATE OF THE OPERA AND MUSIC IN GENERAL.**

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As this is the warmest opportunity that can possibly occur to take up the opera, and all collateral particulars relative to music, I shall certainly avail myself of it, which will be the more necessary as it is completely a novelty; no such thing having been done in any publication similar to this.

I know it has been the fashion to consider music as a menial and servile attendant of the theatre, rather than an ally and an auxiliary. Nothing can be more usual than to read accounts of operas and

masques that have been performed with success without even a single hint as to who were the composers of the music, but I would beg leave to ask if a piece were to be advertised, written by a pen superior, could it be, to that of SHAKESPEAR, and acted by the best members of the schools of BETTERTON and GARRICK, whether the audience would not hiss down the curtain if they were deprived of the first music?

I look upon this ungrateful contempt of music, in authors and managers, to have arisen from their want of a taste for it, and their total inability to describe it. Music has never been encouraged but when BEARD had the management of Covent Garden theatre. What I mean to say is judiciously encouraged; for, LACEY as we shall see, aped the fashion exactly as a guinea pig apes a squirrel, or a clown a tumbler. When at any other time have we seen a manager like BEARD competent to afford the public amusement in this way? I have known GARRICK, and more than GARRICK, imposed upon by experiments till it was apparent they did not know one tune from another.

What hope or expectation then can the public entertain of receiving that rational, that irripachable



delight which the theatre is capable of affording us through the medium of music? If managers know not what it is, and if it is not to be known through the theatre, much less, heaven knows, is it to be known through the opera; a spectacle where the dance is the plot and the opera the episode\*; but remarks of this complexion will come better after I have gone through an account of music, which, during forty years, grew into the highest perfection in this country and is now sunk into insignificance, as land when it ceases to be fertilized degenerates into founess and sterility.

As ITALY, as well in the opinion of PURCELL as of every man who when he speaks of music is competent to judge of it by its effects upon the heart, was the school alone in which English music could receive congenial improvement, and as GERMANY has ever thrown an impervious gloom over our pleasures, which has entangled our reason, and misled our senses into error and perplexity, which, in music

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\* An amateur, who deplored most pathetically this innovation, by which operas are now sunk to nothing, was listening to an admirable opera which was so little attended to that the audience wished it over with all its merit. "This is too bad," said he, "such exquisite music to be so slighted!" "My dear friend," said a gentleman, "the rage for operas is gone by. The only chance for success at the opera house now is to lengthen the dances and shorten the petticoats of the dancers."

in particular, has constantly introduced schisms till we have been left nothing of harmony but its discords, so it will be particularly my business to watch the progress of this corn that once produced a fair and plentiful harvest, and the tares which have since completely choked it up.

It is impossible for me here to go into the differences of HANDEL and BONONCINI, and the disputes of various kinds that kept up the opera as a subject of perpetual contention for a considerable time, and which, in proportion as HANDEL turned more to oratorios, and the Italian interest gained ground of the German, materially brought the opera gradually to perfection. The progress of music in ITALY had been astonishing; and, though the great genius and judgment of CORELLI had in the public opinion conducted it to perfection, it was soon afterwards seen that music, though an imitative art, had properties immediately derived from nature which had been but little noticed, and, when noticed, were almost altogether rejected.

What I mean to allude to is the distinction between melody and harmony, two things that though they assist each other in union are completely different in their nature, whereas it is generally under-



flood at this moment that they both mean the same thing\*. Composers, about 1720, began to feel that

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\* I hope I shall be pardoned for going into this because, although there is no axiom so clear, no position so infallible, not one in a thousand appears to comprehend it; nay, our dictionaries mislead us, while the strictures of the most scientific writers, though they appear to feel the fact, leave the most penetrating understanding in the dark. Look for melody in any dictionary you'll find the explanation to be "Music, harmony of sound." Look for harmony you'll find "Concord, correspondent sentiment," and for music you'll find, "The science of harmonical sounds." Nothing can be so indefinite, while nothing can be so clear and simple as the real truth. Melody means a succession of sounds, harmony a combination of sounds, and music the art of uniting melody and harmony, or rather of assisting melody by the addition of harmony. Thus music of all studies ought to be the least complex, and it is on this account that elaborate treatises have done more injury to the cause of music than to any other study, because, in other studies, causes are frequently remote and hidden, and therefore demand enquiry and investigation; but in music, where every thing is self evident and apparent, the fact speaks for itself without the assistance of an advocate or a reasoner, and stands confessed, a plain, a beautiful, and an unsophisticated truth. This is clearly made out by the manner in which great men have gone into the subject in the treatises that are extant; out of which prodigious number, I shall instance, which will be sufficient for my purpose, RAMEAU the most profound perhaps of them all, ROUSSEAU the most ingenious, and D'ALEMBERT the most simple and faithful to truth. RAMEAU, with an eye more to scientific reputation than a regard to general and legitimate fame, shews the wonderful variety of which sounds are capable, in terms of calculation, so close, so connected, and so clear, that the scholar is astonished to find the endless positions, elucidations, and conclusions, to be proposed, agreed upon,

melody was an animating principle which though it

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and established, by a correct investigation of such numerous variations of harmony. ROUSSEAU, with more sophistry, turns and twists the same propositions in all number of ways; and, making a polypus of music, shews that it may be tortured into a hundred fragments and yet every fragment retain its pristine shape. What is the consequence? RAMEAU, finding his arguments incongruous, and crude, fondly fancies he shall bind them together by an expedient; and, before the mind has time to disentangle itself from the rhapsody in which it has been so long ingeniously bewildered, but not a single moment convinced, he gravely attempts to implore a belief that every difference of opinion ought to be reconciled in the admission that the fundamental bass is exactly NEWTON's center of gravity. ROUSSEAU is not so fortunate; he most indefatigably ransacks invention to prove assertions, which he certainly makes out in argument: but at length, finding that though he has been able to establish nothing for music he has established a great deal for calculation, he is reduced to the necessity of confessing, that a fugue after all is *Le mauvais chef d'œuvre d'un bon musicien*. As to D'ALEMBERT the case is not the same. He volunteers himself on the subject; and, finding, scientific as he was, and minutely acquainted with all the subtilties of argument, that music as it had been represented by all those who wrote before him was completely undefinable, for the sake of the world, he set about studying it. What was the consequence? He found a prodigious mass of chequered trappings and pye balled ornaments which shrouded, eclipsed, and suffocated something like a form; with infinite labour and pains, he stript off this mishapen and motley annoyance, and, having cleared away dissonance, and discord, with those enarmonic, and chromatic auxiliaries that had sweated and smothered this poor unfortunate object, his ears became gradually attracted by some most delicious sounds, which, at length he found to proceed from almost exhausted melody, that like a dying swan was sweetly singing the dirge to its approaching funeral. This treatise,



could exist of itself, harmony, the carcase which it was intended by nature to vivify, could not. In other words, that melody was the song, and harmony the accompaniment; and, in proportion as the judgments of musicians began to be more simplified and the grand and natural effect manifested by the ancients in the other arts considered as subjects of imitation, which circumstance was adventitiously forwarded by the sudden appearance of many composers instructed by nature and their feelings, the true end and tendency of music were accomplished; laboured, abstruse, calculated harmony was rejected, and nothing but what served to give appropriate embellishment to melody was retained.

The moment this system was fully resolved on,

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which is professedly written to elucidate, develope, and simplify that of RAMEAU, which D'ALEMBERT will not allow to be a system, has nothing for its object but the grand and simple position, that music consists of two parts, melody, and harmony; that melody is the gift of inventing sounds in succession, which delight the ear, that harmony is the art of flattering the ear by the union of several sounds together; that melody, which has always existed, is nature, that harmony, which is the only decoration of nature, and has been invented, is art, that, so far as harmony is pursued for the embellishment of melody, it ought to be considered as a friend and a preserver, but that the moment this duty is neglected it becomes a foe and a destroyer.

it is astonishing how beautifully the bird music sung, emancipated from its cage ; but to keep to plain narrative, HANDEL, whose great disadvantage, added to his ignorance of the English language, which was a great impediment to his vocal music, was this harmonic mania, though he turned and twisted it about pretty well, came forward with improved excellence after his trip to ITALY, where he composed *The Triumph of Time and Truth*, in which he has imitated Italian basses almost to servility. GEMINIANI appeared the advocate of melody, TARTINI introduced an appropriate union of melody and harmony, and instrumental music dared not further intrude than to the modest and becoming bounds prescribed to it by nature.

PERGOLESI, that musical wonder ; who, though we know nothing more of his compositions than two comic interludes, *La Serva Padrona*, and *Il Maestro de Musica*, one *Salva Regina*, and his immortal *Stabat Mater*, reached perfection, and therefore was poisoned at twenty-two. GALLUPPI, who composed most sweetly because he despised extraneous harmony, deliciously agitated every pleasing sensation by his music. VINCI, PEREZ, JOMELLI, and a long string of celebrated Italians brought this taste to ENGLAND, and confirmed its reputation till, from about 1756, to 1766.



About this time the German taste began again to prevail; and, though BACH and ABEL, but particularly ABEL, still adhered to the perfect style in which harmony had no triumph over melody, yet the manner began by PICCINI of loading air with accompaniment, which was ingenious enough in him, but followed awkwardly and bungingly by others, shook that reputation which truth and nature had established; and, in spite of the meritorious efforts of VENTO, and a few others, the ear began to be stunned instead of delighted, and music, that had so lately roused the affections and soothed the soul, was considered as destitute of merit unless it could describe the confusion of a battle, or the violence of a hurricane.

The opera having thus been considered as the criterion and regulator as to music in this country, not very properly indeed since music ought not to be submitted to any criterion or regulator but the heart and its feelings, the prevalent taste of the opera became the prevalent taste of the nation, and thus operas, which had certainly been a national benefit, became more and more a national injury, till the theatres following this retrograde motion, not step by step, but halt by halt, sidled off gradually; and left

the throne of music to be usurped by the démon of discord.

As I have attributed this false taste to the prevalence of German music, it is but fitting that I honestly make out my position. I have shewn, in how many periods of the history of music in this country, this innovation was to be dreaded. We have, in consequence of the researches of the original printers of music, in the sixteenth century, proved that documents were found which plainly shew that the style of musical study would be nature in the Italians, and art in the Germans. We have seen ARON RAMIS and AGRICOLA lost in the labyrinth of harmony, to which, by their own confession, they knew not how to find a clue, and yet these men, AGRICOLA in particular, wrote lessons for young beginners. Were not, therefore, the inextricable barbarities of the Germans then exactly what they are now?

What did ZARLINO and his followers? The contemporaries of those Germans, did they lose nature to perplex themselves and the world with art? No. They traced music to its origin, and not only felt but demonstrated that music is not derived from construction and calculation, but from nature and



simplicity. My premises then are clearly made out by that most infallible of all proofs the evidence of long experience; and, as the stage upon the same principal is now adopting every thing monstrous and unnatural, it becomes a question whether, in our insatiable thirst after novelty, we may not one day or other take it into our heads to discard art and adopt nature.

But not to lose sight at present of music it will be fairly asked me whether there is no such thing as melody in the compositions of the Germans? It would be very hard indeed if in such an immense wilderness there should not be a few flowers; but luxuriance was never yet a symptom of strength or maturity. And this is the very thing I complain of; for were the Germans barren of genius, their impositions would be detected; whereas, by scattering here and there a few traits of fancy, a study of their works is something like what the poets describe of the road to the temple of pleasure, which is flowery and deceitful, and which beguiles our time with idle trifling, till the night of disappointment overtakes us, and we view the promised goal through the medium of delusion, and presently lose it in the shades of obscurity.

Melodies however these Germans have, but, by introducing them by fits and starts, their music has no character, except indeed the sort of character that a masque has compared to a face; which serves to disguise it by the substitution of deformity. I will not allow a work of genius to be complete in all its parts unless, like a perfect poem, its drift be premised, followed up, and concluded: and upon this ground the stoutest stickler for the present fashionable music, has not a single argument to stand upon.

I cannot more clearly give an idea of these redundant compositions, and their opposites, than by supposing two orators: One shall be a man of natural eloquence, who supports his arguments in simple and perspicuous language, who borrows no ornament but from reason, nor courts assistance but from truth: The other shall deal in metaphor, allegory, and allusion. He shall wrap up the plainest axiom in figure, logic, and system; in soaring to sublimity he shall fall into quaintness, and in striving to transcend, he shall sink to nothing.

What must be the different effect on their hearers? One shall delight and convince, the other daz-



zle and mislead. One shall win from attention the willing tribute of praise, the other wrest from astonishment a mixture of admiration and pity.

Every thing the ear acknowledges as music is song. Poetry is originally supposed to have been sung. ITALY, therefore, must be considered as the first musical school; vocal music having been ever in greater repute there than in any other part of the world, and, on that account, the Italians are less apt than other composers to go into any thing extraneous, for vocal music is in its nature regular. This is not the case with the Germans, whose study being almost wholly instrumental music, they traverse the wide field of modulation, and quarter it as regularly as a pointer in the stable: or rather, like a citizen on a Sunday, who walks out till he is tired, forgetting that he has to come home again.

This then I conceive to be the cause of that perversion of taste in this country which has unhappily obtained, and in particular as to music; our national characteristic being warm benevolence and broad liberality, which too frequently encourages, when it ought to discriminate.

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CHAP. II.

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THE THEATRE DURING THE INTERREGNUM, AND  
IMMEDIATELY ON GARRICK'S RETURN.

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WHEN the finishing stroke, which was no less than indifference and neglect, had been given to GARRICK's determination of travelling for two years, that the public, which was infallible, might feel their loss; both BEARD and LACEY, felt bold at the circumstance. BEARD, from a consciousness that, having established opera upon a firm and solid basis he should exclusively possess the favour of the town, and LACEY, from a contempt he had ever entertained of GARRICK's judgment as a manager, and a firm belief that through his fancied superiority he should both eclipse Covent Garden, and lower his partner in the opinion of the public.

Both these effects GARRICK had foreseen, and had very early anticipated the consequence of them. He saw the certain operation of all that could possibly be brought forward to supply the place of his



exertions ; he saw, supported as it was by a national taste, that music would naturally make a considerable head against him ; but he saw that LACEY would court the assistance of this auxiliary to the temporary disadvantage of the theatre, and that even BEARD would not be able to find a sufficient stock of materials to compensate for the loss of tragedy and comedy.

His penetration was equally keen in respect to writing and acting, which he knew must in his absence come to what the sportsmen call a complete stand still. As to the veteran writers, they so unequivocally adopted this sentiment that they patiently waited his return ; and, for the novices, their certain ruin must have been the consequence of venturing any thing material in his absence. Both these effects were in a remarkable manner produced. COLMAN, whose reputation had received complete confirmation by the assistance of GARRICK in *The Jealous Wife*, had the good sense to venture at no production of a first rate kind, till his coadjutor returned ; and POWÉL, whom nature had endowed with many of the best requisites of an actor, by having the reins thrown over his neck, soon lost sight of the admirable lessons he had received from GARRICK, who had been his most able preceptor, and

was bewildered out of that little native judgment he possessed, by folly, vanity, and indiscriminate applause.

All this which GARRICK had foreseen literally happened. ARNE was the only composer of real eminence known to the theatre at that time, for BOYCE had retired to the church. MICHAEL ARNE's music was always passable but never excellent, RUSH had just arrived from ITALY and knew the taste of that country, but wanted the judgment to adopt that taste to English ears, or rather to English hearts. BATES had bluster, and bustle, and could compose songs as fast as a blacksmith can make hobnails all of the same size and quality ; and, as to the rest, they were still inferior pretenders.

It is true that there were plenty of compilers, who furnished the theatres with lumping penny-worths; and this mode sometimes, as in the case of *Love in a Village*, and *The Maid of the Mill*, was adopted with success but never unless superintended with judgment and assisted by the original composition of some excellent musician. *Love in a Village* though benefitted by very beautiful music by GALUPPI, GIARDINI, and others, received two-thirds of its value from ARNE, and *The Maid of the Mill*



being, though better assisted by Italians, rather a grand than interesting selection.

All this, however, was neither seen nor felt by LACEY; who, being accustomed to hear God save the King, Roast Beef, and Rule Britannia, knew there were such tunes but could scarcely distinguish one of them from another, fancied that three composers must naturally conquer one, and therefore set RUSH, BATES, and MICHAEL ARNE to work, and presently, in opposition to *Artaxerxes*, came out *The Royal Shepherd*, *Pharnaces*, and *Almena*.

In the mean time GARRICK received very dismal accounts from VICTOR, the treasurer, of the immense sums squandered away to decorate serious operas on the one side of the account, and, on the other, a beggarly account of empty boxes of which, though it was the very effect he anticipated, he bitterly complained while he privately hugged himself for his own sagacity, well knowing that the tendency of this temporary loss would be future fame, and permanent profit.

GARRICK now began to feel a consequence he had never known till that moment; and, excellent as his worldly acting had always been, he was asto-

nished at his own power of attracting such universal applause. He was wished for and expected with the most anxious curiosity at home, while the accounts we received of him from abroad, some of which by the bye, by way of whetting public impatience, even went to insinuate that he meant to pass the remainder of his life in Italy, were the honourable and flattering reception he every where met with, the invitations he continually received from Princes and Ambassadors, which, another stroke of acting, he rejected to sort with men of professional eminence, and in short the great and distinguished attention he daily experienced, such as never had been paid to any other individual.

Nor was this all. He found the success of dramatic writers as indifferent as his most sanguine hopes would possibly have suggested; he found that, in proportion as POWEL got SHAKESPEAR in his head he lost him in his heart; he found that his partner, having begun to give up operas as a bad thing, had, by way of retrieving his declining fortune, conceived an expectation of finding coals in Oxfordshire, from which circumstance he knew he should get as much of the theatrical property into his own hands as he thought proper; he found, in short, that the musical mania began to be on the decline; nay he found JOHNNY BEARD deaf, and Dr. ARNE



damned, and yet, can it be credited? Such was the strange crooked policy and singular vanity of this extraordinary man—he wrote *The Sick Monkey*.

It was well for GARRICK that the public dispised this contemptible production under an idea that it was written by an insidious enemy, otherwise it must have operated heavily against him; but the tide was in his favour and nothing could stop it. The town knew no other topic. Presents awaited him, and every trifling circumstance relative to him in ever so remote a degree was a subject of general conversation. In short, no object of the greatest national importance could engross more attention; the Royal family graced his first appearance, while he as contentedly swallowed all this adulation as an alderman does the green fat of a turtle, still keeping up those outward signs of diffidence and apparent self-denial, which he ever put on, by chusing *Much ado about Nothing* for his first appearance, that it might signify how much the goodness of the public surpassed his desert. What a wonderful union of merit and modesty; no bishop ever repeated *Noli episcopari* more devoutly.\*

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\* GARRICK prepared an address to the audience, which he delivered previous to the play he first appeared in. When he came upon the stage, he was welcomed with three loud plaudits, each

He certainly, however, deserved every attention

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finishing with a huzza. As soon as this unprecedented applause had a little subsided, he used every art of which he was so completely master to lull the tumult into a profound silence—and, just as all was hushed as death, and anxious expectation sat on every face, old CERVETTO, who was better known by the name of NOSEY, anticipated the very first line of the address by—aw—a tremendous yawn. A convulsion of laughter ensued, and it was some minutes before the wished-for silence could be again restored. That, however, obtained—GARRICK delivered his address in that happy, irresistible manner in which he was always sure to captivate his audience; and retired with applause such as was never better given, nor better deserved. But the matter did not rest here—The moment he came off the stage, he flew like lightning to the music room, where, collaring astonished NOSEY, he began to abuse him pretty vociferously. ‘Wha—why—you old scoundrel—you must be the most infernal’—at length poor CERVETTO—“Oh! Mr. GARRICK! vat is the matter—vat I haf do—Oh God vat it is!”—“The matter! why you old, damned, eternal, senseless idiot—with no more brains than your damned bass viol—just at the—a—very moment I had played with the audience—tickled them like a trout, and brought them to the most accommodating silence—so pat to my purpose—so perfect—that it was, as one may say, a companion for MILTON’s visible darkness”—“Indeed, Mr. GARRICK, it vas no darkness.” “Darkness! stupid fool—but how should a man of my reading make himself understood by—a—answer me, was not the whole house, pit, box, and gallery, very still?” “Yes, Sir, indeed—still as mouse.” “Well then, just at that very moment did you not, with your damned jaws extended wide enough to swallow a six-penny loaf—yaw?—Oh I wish you had never shut your damned jaws again.” “Sare, Mr. GARRICK—only if you please hear me von vord. It is alway the vay—it is indeed, Mr. GARRICK—alway the vay I go when I haf the greatest rapture, Mr. GARRICK.” The little great man’s anger instantly cooled. The cunning readiness of this Italian flattery operated exactly contrary



that could possibly be paid to him. His absence had shewn, that without him the theatre could exist but not live, and on that return, which, for the remainder of his management, ensured the stage a large flow of health and vigour, no wonder he became more than ever the theme of universal admiration.

Having now turned to as the sailors call it and gone in earnest to work; materials of course flocked in upon him from every quarter, and he even began to have a better choice of new goods than he had been in possession of since he had become manager.\* With these advantages, seconded by the ex-

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to the last line of an epigram—the honey was tasted and the sting forgot—and it not only procured NOSEY's pardon, but forced a declaration from his patron that he ought to be forgiven for the wit of the offence.

\* LACEY in this business played off a stroke of policy which his partner with all his wariness had not foreseen. As soon as he had given the matter breathing time, GARRICK represented to LACEY the prodigious success he had met with, and that the public would not be satisfied, unless they saw him twice a week at least. "Well, and what then" said LACEY. "Hey, what then? Why then, what do you mean to allow me for the advantages the concern will reap, in addition to those derived from my return to the management, by my acting?" "Why," said LACEY, "I have been thinking of this DAVID and I won't allow a halfpenny. Play and gratify your vanity, or let it alone, and let the theatre take its chance.

ertions of his company, who were glad enough to welcome his return that something like regularity might be restored, he set himself busily forward, and saw each department conducted with every possible propriety, and decorum. Instead of the indecency, profligacy, and debauchery, that had been known at different periods to characterize the green rooms, the dressing rooms, and the avenues of the play-house, the manners of the actors and the actresses were unoffending, polite, and elegant; and nothing appeared in the conduct of the theatre but might have graced a drawing room. It is but justice also to say, that during BEARD'S management of Covent Garden, every possible attention was paid to propriety and decorum.

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“ If you play, we shall have broken legs and arms, and cries of  
“ murder, to amuse us two evenings in the week; and on the other  
“ four evenings, there will be nobody in the house. If the common  
“ business goes on, the receipts will be less but they will be regular,  
“ and the average every Saturday will be pretty nearly the same.”  
GARRICK, totally unprepared for this thrust, did however all in his power to parry it, but LACEY remained inflexible, and, if GARRICK'S assertions are to be credited, he never had any stated emolument.

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## CHAP. III.

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GARRICK, AS AN AUTHOR, RESUMED.

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As an examination of the merits of authors and actors, will naturally bring out all that will be necessary now to relate concerning the stage, and my limits are verging towards a close, I shall go on with authors and such collateral particulars as are involved in a description of their works.

The first dramatic undertaking GARRICK engaged in after his return was the production of a play, in conjunction with COLMAN, who had given strong proof both of genius and judgment in *The Jealous Wife*; he had given also proof of deference, modesty, and good sense, in permitting GARRICK to teach him his trade, for it proved in the event that COLMAN was never so good a dramatic writer as while he had GARRICK at his elbow.

GARRICK's share of this play *The Clandestine Marriage*, was Lord Ogleby, and the courtly family, COLMAN's, Sterling, and the city family, and

it is astonishing how the two men appear in their separate tasks. COLMAN has chastely and accurately delineated character, GARRICK has added to strong character, strong situation; and, to add to this consummate knowledge of stage effect, how admirably well it was got up!

It is really honourable to letters, and to the nation, that the theatre could be capable of furnishing so rational a treat, so greatly perfect and excellent in all its parts; so unaffectedly attractive, as this play; which, though GARRICK only superintended it, was acted to perfection. I don't make this remark as a singularity, for many pieces at that time deserved this praise. I only mean to prove that, when we consider the incomparable acting of KING, which, like a single jewel rescued from the plunder of time, is now preserved to us with equal brilliancy, his mixture of gout, folly, pleasantry, philanthropy, debility, and dignity, put on with such fancy and worn with such elegance—

When we reflect on that astonishing creature Mrs. CLIVE; who, if she herself had written the part as the portait of a real character, and, not content with this, had infused herself into this real character, could not have been more in nature—When we go on and speak of the chaste propriety and



found good sense of YATES, the pert, vulgar consequence so naturally and characteristically assumed by Miss POPE, the accommodating servility of BADDELEY, than whom nobody ever performed that particular foreigner, a Swiss, so well, as GARRICK perfectly knew, the easy, familiar impertinence of PALMER, not the late PALMER, but his predecessor.

When we add to all this, that the play was strengthened by HOLLAND in Melville, and POWEL, in Lovewell, that Mrs. ABINGTON performed one of the chambermaids, and that the inferior parts, even to the counsellors, witness the admirable performance of LOVE in Serjeant Flower, were supported most ably, I cannot resist a belief that the stage at any time whatever could not have been in a state of higher perfection as to acting; for the merits of every performer I have mentioned were of such superior excellence that the parts be what they might, could not degrade them, and the public accorded their applause to HOLLAND, and POWEL, as much for the good sense and condescension in accepting parts below their usual standard, as for the intrinsic merit they displayed under such disadvantages, and it heightened their opinion of Mrs. ABINGTON, in whom they plainly saw, under the

ease of Betty the chambermaid, that merit which afterwards perfected into the elegance, grace and fashion, of Lady Betty Modish.

The *Country Girl*, which was performed in 1766, was a judicious alteration of WYCHERLEY'S *Country Wife*. As it is now frequently performed and the public have had many recent opportunities of judging of its merits, I shall only say that every thing has not yet been done which might have been to the advantage of that subject. *Neck or Nothing*, almost a literal translation of Le SAGE'S *Crispin Rival de Son Maître* deceived GARRICK when he read it in the French, as it would have done any person, for it there seems to be the very sort of farce to please on the English stage. The event however, did not justify the experiment, though it was admirably performed.

*Cymon*, a piece written to display those scenic effects which GARRICK had witnessed in France, and Italy, was in itself a weak production but it was neither without interest nor pleasantry. There was always a want of consequence in those first pieces, which were the sole production of GARRICK, his pen was not equal to more than a farce. The performance, however, was powerfully sustained; and among other material advantages, MI-



CHAEEL ARNE, by copying the manner of his father, and thinking of BOYCE as he composed, produced a number of sweet airs, particularly those so deliciously sung by his wife.

*A Peep behind the Curtain*, came out in 1767, with good success.\* It was a fair satire, indeed rather an admonition, than a castigation; it hit but it did not wound; besides which, there are some things in it irresistably comic, particularly the circumstance of making the old man dance against his will. This piece was incomparably performed,

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\* GARRICK who always knew consequences, felt that the old vehicle of dramatic strictures and mock rehearsals, had been generally received with a sort of jealousy and revolt. He therefore bespoke the favour of the town in a most artful manner. KING spoke the prologue, in which there was this line,

I THOMAS KING, of King-street, am the poet.

The fact is, this admirable performer was the Bayes of the piece; but this equivocal assertion, which nine-tenths of the audience took literally, gave a warmth to the applause which was of infinite assistance to the first nights reception. GARRICK had practised something like this with success before. *Cymon* came out after the public had been deprived of KING's exertions for some weeks, in consequence of his having broken his thigh. They were glad enough naturally to hail the return of their favourite, which GARRICK took the advantage of, by making KING, in the prologue, thus bespeak the public favour, in favour of himself. I believe the last line was, for I quote from memory,

Scarce well of one, spare me, a second, tumble,

and the music, which was composed by BARTHELEMAN, and which had a mixed character of Italian, French, and English, produced a degree of novelty which gave it good effect.

The *Jubilee*,\* a spectacle, in which were in-

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\* As the *Jubilee* was a memorable epoch in the reign of GARRICK, it would be unpardonable to speak of it without noticing some of those curious circumstances that attended so extraordinary a business. Nothing can be more evident than that SHAKESPEAR might have laid very quietly in Stratford church, nobody would have disturbed his ashes, had not such a popular measure been the probable means of insuring a plentiful harvest to *Drury-Lane* on the following season. And yet, it was *managed* with so much caution, so much wariness, that, according to the representation of the matter to every body who was concerned in it, there did not appear any such thing in agitation. This cautiousness answered two purposes—it not only drew many to Stratford who would otherwise have suspended their curiosity till they should have seen it in London, but it served as a feasible excuse for requesting every body's trouble and attendance for nothing. In short, GARRICK, in relation to the *Jubilee*, manœuvred every where, and with every body. He procured abuse to be inserted in the papers, which he got all his friends to answer. He enlisted a prodigious number of volunteers, whose exertions he pretty liberally exacted, at their expence; and at length performed the same entertainment ninety-five times, in one season, at *Drury-Lane*, which he sent people an hundred miles *not* to see. Indeed it was impossible it should be seen; for, had the pageant been attempted at Stratford, the streets were so uneven that the cars of Melpomene, Thalia, and the Fairies, would have been overthrown into chasms in the pavement; besides the leather, tinsel, and spangled trappings, would have cut a lamentable figure by day-light. It is true they heard GARRICK, an advantage worth ten times the money, repeat so exquisitely



roduced characters in SHAKESPEAR's plays, was performed as every body knows, more than half the season of 1769, and 1770; a circumstance certainly unprecedented in the annals of the theatre. *King Arthur*, was brought forward in 1771, and assisted by scenery, and most judiciously improved, as to the music, by ARNE, who greatly to his honour, though according to GARRICK's plan, he was obliged to introduce some music of his own, so far from mutilating PURCELL, rescued those beauties from oblivion, which time and ignorance had before obscured. ARNE idolized PURCELL, and it was his pride in this particular instance, to place him in that conspicuous situation the brilliancy of his reputation demanded. GARRICK's view in bringing

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his ode, which poem FOOTE pronounced excellent when he heard it, and execrable when he read it, and they heard ARNE's exquisite music to that ode; and, to say the truth, the dinners, and all the circumstances relative to them were pleasurable, if we indeed except the fire-works, the horse-race, and the masquerade. The last in particular, was inconvenient and distressing beyond description, for the booth being built on a swamp close to the river, and nobody having considered that sometimes in the month of September it rains, the company had scarcely assembled, when the wet began to ooze through the crevices; in five minutes after they were paddling in the wet; five minutes after that it was over their shoes, and presently they were obliged to take to the benches, then to the orchestra, and then to the windows—thus there was not a creature out of about four hundred people that escaped being wet through.

out this piece was to perform the same duty by DRYDEN.

*Hamlet*, was, in the same season, with great diffidence, altered by GARRICK, in compliance with the judgment of a host of critics, who have so often suggested a necessity of getting rid of Ostric, the grave diggers, and as much as possible of the lighter parts of the play. The critics, however, on the other side of the question, began to consider him like Bottom the weaver, who wishes to play all the piece. After a very few nights it was withdrawn. The *Institution of the Garter*, was brought out in honour of that ceremony at Windsor. GARRICK used WEST's materials, and added a Fool, and some other comic characters. It was performed twenty-six nights a run at least, equal to its merits.

The *Irish Widow*, performed in 1772, grew popular through the exertions of Mrs. BARRY, to whom GARRICK most pompously dedicated it. It is extraordinary, that he, who better than any man, knew it to be bad policy, should be so fond of deprecation. The *Chances*, in which GARRICK performed Don John so incomparably, and in which performance he was so ably assisted by Mrs. ABINGTON, then in the zenith of her reputation, was produced in 1773, and is only BEAUMONT and



FLETCHER's play with appropriate alterations. *Albumazor* was performed the same year. It was an alteration of the old play, as I have before stated. It had no success. *Afred* came out the beginning of the following season; it had great support but little success. The music was confided to the care of THEODORE SMITH, who had better have let ARNE alone, since he had not the ability to treat him as ARNE had treated PURCELL in *Arthur*.

A *Christmas Tale* appeared in 1774. The subject was *la Fee Urgelle*, of FAVART, which BEAUMONT and FLETCHER had treated, under the title of *Woman Pleased*, but which had a much more ancient date. This piece was full of magic, and intended, like *Cymon*, to give advantage to scenery and decoration; a circumstance which GARRICK had adopted with great caution after the *Chinese Festival*, till his return from Italy.\* LOUTERBOURG was at that

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\* Though I would not place this spectacle under the head of dramatic pieces, it will not be improper to say a word or two concerning it. The *Chinese Festival* was a grand ballet, indeed nothing more than has been always considered as admissible at the opera, and indeed at the theatre, except in that one instance, produced by NOVERRE, the VESTRIS of that day. It took eighteen months in its preparation, and was expected to eclipse every thing that had been seen of its kind, but unluckily we had just declared war against France, and popular prejudice prevailing, the spectacle was damned without mercy; the theatre was mutilated, and an attempt made to pull

time first known in this country, who wanted completely, with great propriety, to alter the system of scenery which always had prevailed, and indeed it does in a great measure yet prevail; but GARRICK, finding the new system very expensive, would not adopt the whole of it, and therefore, though scenes were improved, the evil has not to this day been completely cured. This piece has been most unmercifully handled, and heaven knows it was poor enough, but where spectacle only calls in assistance from the relative acts, if the piece be of that character that admits it, there certainly is not so much

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GARRICK's house down. Did this spirit prevail rationally it might do service, but why one spectacle of this nature should be interdicted to the toleration of so many others, is an instance of supererogate criticism, a kind of intruding justice, that can spring from nothing but absurd and unfair prejudice. FOOTE ridicules this very well in the *Minor*, where he makes SHIFT say, speaking of his situation as a candle-snuffer, that he acquired intrepidity, "but," says he, "an unlucky crab apple applied to my right eye, by a patriot gingerbread baker from the Borough, who would not suffer three dancers from Switzerland, because he hated the French, forced me to a precipitate retreat." I have often lamented that the beauties of real classical writers are seldom tasted by the erudite. FOOTE, who often really meant more than met either the eye or the ear, had in this speech an idea of Military Gasconades. The ball that struck the French General CREQUI, was said to have had a label with the words, "A CREQUI." This, says the French author who relates the circumstance, is like the arrow that deprived PHILIP of Macedon of his eye, which was addressed, "*A l'oeil gauche de Philip.*" Nothing can be better burlesque than this.



injury done to the public as by the exhibition of finery, monsters and gewgaws. I dont care how much the Dramatist employs the painter. My quarrel to him is when the taste of the town is to be regulated by the property man.

*Bon Ton*, which is *High Life Below Stairs* reversed, is a farce of considerable merit. It was performed in 1775. *May Day* was a mere trifle, it had very little success. There were two or three preludes written by GARRICK, and Prologues and Epilogues out of all number and reckoning, which though they cannot be quoted for excellent poetry were nevertheless full of excellent point.

## CHAP. IV.

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FOOTE, AND MURPHY RESUMED.

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I SHALL now return to those authors, an account of whose works remains to be completed. We left off FOOTE at the MAYOR OF GARRATT. His next piece was *The Patron*, brought out in 1764. The subject is from MARMONTEL, which COLMAN had an idea of treating, but was forestalled by FOOTE. This comedy had pretensions to more favour than it received; perhaps its cool reception was owing to its want of that personality which he had taught the town to grow pleased with. It is true, the principal character was intended for a nobleman whose follies were known to the literati, but the public at large were strangers to them.

The *Commissary*, the next piece of this writer, performed in 1765, was of another complexion. Here was character and personality enough. This co-



medy, though it must be confessed, the best writers of that day held it in contempt, the town greatly approved. It is more a melange, and a patch work play, than almost any thing upon the English Stage. The *Commissary* is *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* of MOLIÈRE, from which author, many other parts, and particularly the orator, who in the original, which is better than in FOOTE, after he is locked out of the door, harangues from the window, is also taken.

This is not all. The whole of the plot which relates to Mrs. MECHLIN, is still a stronger plagiarist, for it is rendered almost word for word from *La Femme d'Intrigue*, and bits and scraps from other pieces of D'ANCOURT. Nay, the old widow who wants a young husband is not omitted, nor even the music-master, nor the circumstance of sending the child home in a *bais viol*.\* It cannot be denied, however, that there is much pleasantry in the piece, but still that wanton personality that pervades it, devotes it to execration in all honest minds.

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\* What I particularly allude to is the character of Dr. CATGUT, which was levelled at ARNE, who had peculiarities, and what man who ever lived has been without them? but perhaps upon earth never breathed a being of more honourable principles. I should

The *Devil upon two Sticks*, which was produced in 1768, contained a good deal of general, and a good deal of personal satire. For the vehicle, its author had, as every body knows, to thank LE SAGE; and, for many parts of the piece he had obligations to MOLIERE. The controversy between the Fellows and the Licentiates of Warwick-lane, was fair game, and Dr. LAST, which it is said was actually a living character, and which was so wonderfully performed by WESTON, is that sort of personality which may be tolerated, because the object was obscure, and the drift was general admonition for the cure of folly. Other objects, however, had better have been left alone. Knavery will never be corrected by the exposition of one notorious knave, except by law; nor will intrigues of a court wear a new face by informing an audience, rather indecently by the bye, that a commoner has been disgraced by accepting a coronet.\*

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be the most ungrateful wretch that ever existed, even though it may, perhaps, be deemed intrusion, if I did not force this truth upon the Reader. ARNE rescued my musical fame and character, and established both when his fiat might have crushed me, and all this with scarcely a personal knowledge of me. I have known him the warm and liberal friend of others. He had no radical fault in the world; but his mind was weak, and he was perpetually imposed upon, and is this a reason why a man who has left behind him a most splendid professional reputation is to be publicly exposed at the moment he was getting his bread by the public? Mimickry is at best a poor act, but it becomes infamy when it attempts to wound the peace of individuals.

\* FOOTE has now and then felt this severely, the taking one Lord for another in this piece had very nearly damned it,



The *Lame Lover* was performed in 1770. It had a good deal of the sort of merit which characterized this authors pieces, that is to say asperity and good writing; but the string may be wound up till it cracks. Health, and property, are objects of great solicitude in this and every other country, but this does not prove that there is no fair game for the Stage but Physicians and Lawyers. The *Maid of Bath* acted in 1771, ought to have been hissed off the Stage, not as a dramatic production, for it is one of the pleasantest pieces by this writer, but because it was an unwarrantable and scandalous attack on a family, who were the more likely to feel the injury, by being in a public situation. It is certainly best when it can be practicable to treat unprincipled malignity, like this, with contempt; but the world in such cases should be the arbitrator, and do justice to individuals. That this sentiment was felt, the first nights reception of this piece evinced; indeed Foote's pieces were generally very nearly damned the first night, though they grew afterwards into fame. The fact is, what is every body's business is nobody's business, and thus harmless and unoffending characters are held up to derision, to fill the pockets of profligate satirists.

The *Nabob*, performed in 1772, is a play strongly

written, and boldly drawn, and upon a subject, had it been generally treated, which might have come within the province of the stage; but the Theatre is no court of enquiry, and it was extremely indecent to judge a cause before an audience which was at that moment agitating in the Senate. It was unhandsome and unjust, to excite a general odium against a body, by the exposition of a single character; but these were the means by which this satirist is said to have caught the living manners, which assertion is false; he never caught the living manners at all, he only caught the peculiarities of a few living individuals.

*Piety in Pattens* was produced in February 1773, to eke out a spectacle, which Foote had long promised the town, under the title of *The Primitive Puppet Show*, and in which he pronounced an exordium, celebrated at that time as the achmé of eloquence, genius, and erudition, but afterwards found to be a mixture of historical narrative, abuse against the other Theatres, and a promise of excellence at his own, that never was kept; for, to use the words of an Irishman upon the occasion, the entertainment was all exordium. Any other author would have had his Theatre pulled down for this imposition. *The Bankrupt* had for its drift the exposition of those



nefarious members of society, who manufacture artificial failures, and systematically evade the bankruptcy laws. It also went into the arcana of doing newspapers, both which objects were clearly fair game. It was successful; and except in a few trifling particulars, deservedly so.

The *Cozeners*, which play we find again a good deal from D'ANCOURT, and in which also we are perpetually put in mind of FACE, SUBTLE, and DOLL COMMON, in the *Alchymist*, was one of FOOTE's boldest pieces. If Lord Chesterfield and his graces had been laudably attacked, there could not have been found a fairer object of satire, because it was not a reprobation of the man, otherwise than as it concerned a foul and poisonous system that he had disseminated; but merely to bring on a clown and put him perpetually in mind of the graces, was leaving the improper tendency of the publication where he found it. Mrs. SIMONY was an unwarrantable attack. Strike at the vice with all my heart, but let the individual receive his punishment from the hand of justice. It is not for the Stage to supersede the practice of the Courts; and, if the laws have determined the necessity of establishing sober, solemn enquiry into the perpetration of crimes, and if after all the innocent have sometimes suffered

for the guilty, shall the characters of men lie at the mercy of a prowling satirist, and their fame be destroyed by the dash of a pen? No man can defend the measure, for it is not only a libel on the man, but on the government by which he is protected.

The *Capuchin*, performed in 1776, is an aggravation of all this author's former temerity, for to shameless impudence, it added despicable cowardice. To attack and expose to public ridicule, a woman! It was too contemptible. But FOOTE seems to have studied his own safety through the whole of his conduct; having chosen characters either so independent, that he excited only their contempt, or so insignificant as to be sheltered by kindred pusillanimity, and this grew on him, for, in the *Coxeners*, he was protected by Dr. DODD's gown, and in the *Capuchin*, by the Duchefs of KINGSTON's petticoat.

Thus have I, with some pain, because the merit of FOOTE was equal to any undertaking had he pursued the right road, examined the dramatic works of this author, which I have conceived it my duty to hold out as a beacon to warn others of those rocks FOOTE split upon, in his attempts to emulate



ARISTOPHANES, whose moral character has been devoted to execration and contempt, and introduce that vicious and licentious perversions of broad truth and universal morality on the English Stage, which even the wonderful genius of MENANDER was unable to recover, and by which the Grecian Stage degenerated more and more; till at length it was lost in the wreck of the Grecian Empire.

We now return to MURPHY, who produced at Covent-Garden, in 1764, on the same evening, a Comedy, called *No One's Enemy But His Own*, and a Farce, under the title of *What We Must All Come To*; two misnomers. A man, who is an enemy to morality, and the exercise of it in all mankind, cannot be said to be no one's enemy but his own; nor are fighting and squabbling for trifles what necessarily we must all come to in marriage during the honey-moon. The last piece was the best, and perhaps was damned for being in bad company. It has, however, given repeated pleasure since, under the title of *Three Weeks after Marriage*. The *Choice* was a Farce hurried up for the benefit of Mrs. YATES.

The *School for Guardians*, a Comedy, performed at Covent-Garden in 1767, was taken from three of

MOLIERE's plays. The materials were good in their kind, but they made up a strange incongruous mass, when mixed together. The Play was performed but six nights.

*Zenobia* was a tragedy which had great success. The opportunity MURPHY had at that time of writing for the BARRY's was of great consequence to his reputation and their's. It cannot be denied that the fault of pompous language pervades this, as well as the rest of this author's tragedies ; but strong effect, by no means strange or unnatural, was eminently their characteristic.

MURPHY's next piece was the *Grecian Daughter*, on which a variety of opinions have been ventured. It has been an acted pantomime, virtue outraged, and a great deal more, but no observation has been able to controvert one plain fact, which is, that it has been long a favorite of the public ; that the grand incident on which the plot hinges is simple, and natural, and begets a most extraordinary degree of interest.

The subject is the old story of the *Roman Matron*, and the author is candid enough to confess that he



in some degree availed himself of the *Zelmire* of BELLOY.\* He might perhaps have gone further, and traced the subject to METASTASIO, from whom BELLOY took his play.†

*Alzuma*, 1773, had the fault of the *School for Guardians*. It was a mixture of three French tragedies, as that had been of three French comedies, consequently the author endeavoured to reconcile those jarring interests without effect. It was just permitted on the stage, where it lingered nine nights and then expired.

*Know your own Mind*, performed in 1777, is a comedy of considerable merit. It had a long run during the season in which it was produced, and has been repeated frequently with good effect.

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\* I have heard, and I believe my authority is pretty good, that the first idea of writing this play was suggested by a picture, which the author accidentally noticed as he was waiting in the room of a celebrated painter. In this picture the centinel, as he witnessed the interesting scene of the daughter suckling her parent, bursts into tears.

† BELLOY was called the dramatic thief. He was, however, a favourite of VOLTAIRE, who answered, when he heard a critic accuse BELLOY of pilfering from him; "*Ah, le cher voleur! Il m'a bien embelli!*"

With this comedy I finish my account of MURPHY's dramatic productions ; an author who studied stage effect very happily, and whose writings, whether in tragedy, comedy, or farce, never outraged nature, nor wounded morality.

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## CHAP. V.

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HAWKESWORTH, HUME, FRANKLIN, BICKERSTAFF,  
HIFFERNAN, ARNE, KENRICK, GENTLEMAN,  
REED, AND LOVE.

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AS those authors, who wrote principally after 1763, and but little before that period, had better, for the sake of a general review of their productions, come in this place, I shall bring them now under a regular review.

One of these was HAWKESWORTH, celebrated for several works of great ingenuity. For the stage he altered *Amphytrion*, from DRYDEN, at the desire of GARRICK, but introduced very little of his own; the principal part of what he supplied being from MO-LIERE. It did very little.

*Oroonoko* was altered from SOUTHERN, by HAWKESWORTH, by leaving out the whole of the comic

scenes. A vacuum that required much more than he has supplied, admirable as his writing is, though not equal to SOUTHERN's, to fill it. The interest was beautifully kept alive in the original by the relief, bad as it was, the author had given it. The Planters were in nature and material to the plot, though it must be confessed they were gross. It was difficult to protract the principal story; and, however meritorious the attempt, so both HAWKESWORTH and the public felt it. *Edgar and Emmeline* was an elegant piece; but changing of sexes has always something in it preposterous and revolting, unless contrived for some comic purpose.

When we talk of HUME, we always add, the author of *Douglas*, a play that ever was, and ever will be ranked among those of first rate merit, though it must be confessed it is the less interesting because of its resemblance in the catastrophe to many other things. The language is, however, beautifully poetic. GRAY calls it the true language of the stage; and adds, that though it has infinite faults, the scene between Matilda and the old Peasant is so masterly, that it strikes him blind to all the defects in the world.

*Agis* was finely acted and assisted by spectacle,



otherwise it is probable it would not have been performed a second night. GRAY, who loved HUME as a writer, says of this play, " I cry to think that " it be by the author of *Douglas*: why, it is all " modern Greek. The story is an antique statue " painted white and red, frized, and dressed in a " negligee made by a Yorkshire mantua maker." The *Siege of Aquileia*, performed in 1759, had success; and as to the writing, it certainly is, in many places, very fine: but for a siege, it is a tame business; and, so far from being a resemblance to the memorable circumstance it ought to describe, it is actually the description of the Siege of Berwick, in the reign of Henry the Third.

The *Fatal Discovery* was performed in 1769. HUME had certainly by this time greatly fallen off as a writer. This tragedy was reluctantly permitted during nine nights; and so was *Alonzo*, which play, through Mrs. BARRY's admirable acting, deceived the audience on the first night into a high opinion of its merit. HUME says, in his preface, that she received applause greater than ever shook a theatre. *Alfred*, the last production of this author, lived only three nights. In short, *Douglas* is equal in value to all the rest of HUME's works.

FRANKLIN, a voluminous writer and translator, but who, like many other men of literary consequence, is supposed to have lent his name to book-sellers, than which nothing can be more reprehensible, for it is actually literary swindling, is said to have translated the works of SOPHOCLES and VOLTAIRE, and to have either written, or translated, the following plays.

The *Earl of Warwick*, performed in 1767, was little more than a direct translation of *Le Comte de Warwick* of LA HARPE. Mrs. YATES performed Margeret of Anjou incomparably. *Orestes*, produced in 1769, from VOLTAIRE, was performed for Mrs. YATES's benefit. *Electra*, from VOLTAIRE's play, which he stole from *Hamlet*, after having abused SHAKESPEAR, was performed in 1774, but it had very little success. *Matilda* was little more than a translation of VOLTAIRE's *Duc de Foix*. The *Contract*, a comedy brought out at the Haymarket, and damned in the presence of the KING, and the ROYAL FAMILY, the only time perhaps they ever partook of such an amusement, is stolen from *Le triple Mariage* of DESTOUCHES.\*

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\* It is a very curious circumstance, that the same incident that damned the play in England had very nearly procured for it the same fate in France,



BICKERSTAFF produced the following dramatic pieces. *Thomas and Sally*, the principal merit of which piece was ARNE's charming music. Some of the poetry is neat and lyric, for this author knew the art of writing for music; but, whatever there is technical in it is completely false. I heard a sailor say, when he heard the expression "tack about and bear away," "why that's go out of the door, and go up the chimney."

*Love in a Village*, 1762, which had a run almost equal to the *Beggar's Opera*, is made up, as we have seen, of several things, even to the stealing of CHARLES JOHNSON's songs, which were before stolen; one of these, "My Dolly was the fairest thing," from RAN-

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and yet certainly it is truly comic, and very natural. The father, the son, and the daughter, are married unknown to one another, and are therefore embarrassed at making known the secret; but, when they find that they are all in the same predicament, a general amnesty is passed. Upon this the youngest daughter, a little girl of twelve years old, tells her father that she has her secret to impart too: "Hey," cries the father, "why zounds you are not married secretly are you?" "No," says she, "Papa; but I beg you'll let me be married as soon as possible." FOOTE said that, when he lighted the KING to his chair, his Majesty asked who the piece was written by. "It is written," replied the wit, "by one of your Majesty's chaplains; but it is dull enough to have been written by a bishop."

DOLPH. The circumstances are nevertheless interesting and entertaining, and the poetry is well calculated to assist musical expression, but nothing can be more puerile than the dialogue. The music is a beautiful selection, and those songs composed by ARNE are delightful.

The *Maid of the Mill*, 1765, is much better written than *Love in a Village*, the first act is perhaps as perfect as any thing on the stage. It however anticipates the denouement, and every thing afterwards declines. The fault of this author was that he was bigotted to Italian music, and French dialogue, and therefore the music in this opera is fine, and the dialogue dull, *Ralph* and *Fanny* are the best characters in the piece, but they are only an improvement on *Hodge* and *Madge*.

*Daphne and Amintor*, 1765, was ST. FOIX's *L'Oracle* interspersed with songs to bring forward the wonderful singing of MRS. ARNE. GALLUPPI's music was delightful, and CHALONS, the compiler, composed a good overture and a pleasing duett. The *Plain Dealer* was judiciously enough altered from WYCHERLEY. It was greatly performed. *Love in the City*, 1767, which piece has been since cut down



to the *Romp*, was hissed through six nights and then withdrawn. SHUTER, who would not allow this author to be more than a good cook, said when he came off the stage on the fifth night, it was all up with the piece; brandy would not save it.

*Lionel and Clarissa* had considerable merit; but, in this piece, there were too many cooks; and, when it came to be altered under the title of *A School for Fathers*, it did no better. This author measured his scenes as an engraver squares a picture, and thus, though correct, by being always regular, they were always cold. The perpetually going off with a song and teaching the audience, in imitation of the opera, when to expect a bravura song, a comic song, a cavatina, a duett, a quartetto, and a finale, began to grow intolerable tiresome; besides sentiment at this time was only for comedy, and, just as that author had complained that the *Clandestine Marriage* has anticipated *Love in the City*, though he himself had stolen the hint, so he now complained that *False Delicacy* had anticipated *Lionel and Clarissa*.

The *Absent Man*, performed in 1768, was only BRUYERE's story, which was copied into the Spec-

tator, put into dialogue. It was too flimzy to do any thing material. The *Padlock* was performed at Drury Lane, in 1768, as every body knows, with very great success. This author's pen never held out to the end. There is a great disproportion between the first act and the second. It was however well managed. The plot is from CERVANTES. Nothing could exceed the sweetness of Mrs. ARNE's singing, and BANNISTER as a manly, chaste, and natural singer, gave a specimen of abilities that had perhaps never before been heard.

The *Hypocrite*, which was altered from CIBBER's *Nonjuror*, with an additional character for WESTON, had success. Mrs. ABINGTON's acting was a rich display of fashion and elegance, as well as feeling and nature. The *Ephesian Matron*, was performed at Ranelagh, where it was considered as vulgar to listen to music, and therefore the real effect of this piece was never known. *Dr. Last in his Chariot* was a bad sequel to a good piece. It was taken from MOLIERE's *Malade Imaginaire*. FOOTE wrote a complete scene, indeed the best in the piece. The *Captive*, which was taken from DRYDEN's *Don Sebastian*, had no success.



*It's well it's no Worfe*, a comedy which has since been cut down to a farce under the title of *The Pannel*, was nearly damned on the first night. It was taken from CALDRONE. The plot was extremely intricate and betrayed a great want of knowledge in this author of tying and untying a dramatic knot. KING, and Mrs. ABINGTON, were incomparable in the Valet and the Maid. The *Recruiting Serjeant* was performed successfully at Drury Lane, after being repeated without attention, for two seasons at Ranelagh. *He Would if he Could*, was LA SERVA PADRONA's. It was performed but once.

HIFFERNAN, a character in the style of SMART, and HOLT, who, on account of his want of prudence and principle, every body shunned, wrote an after-piece called the *Ladies Choice*, which had no success. The *Wishes of a Free People*, was a handsome compliment, though by the bye it is most miserably written, to the Queen, on her arrival in this country. It is dedicated to her Majesty in French. It contained a charge on Managers for not bringing out meritorious productions, which charge the want of merit in the piece itself completely refuted.

The *New Hippocrites*, which is intended to ridicule the absurd practice of pinning implicit faith on the judgment of empiricks, was performed only two nights. It was a miserable business. The *Earl of Warwick* was a translation from LA HARPE, but not so good as FRANKLIN'S. These and a poor farce, called *The Philosophic Whim*, make up all the pieces of this curious character.

ARNE, to whose incomparable musical talents it will be my pride to pay every tribute of praise and admiration, ventured incautiously, though in one instance not unwisely, to write for the stage. I allude to *Artaxerxes*, there was no translation of this piece except the literal one which was used for English readers at the Opera house, where it had been performed with the music of HASSE.

With this translation for want of a better, and so much knowledge of Italian as might serve to assist him in the adoption of METASTASIO'S ideas, ARNE formed his opera. There is nothing sublime in his language certainly, but the circumstances, which are strong, and the conduct, which is artful, were so rendered as not to lose their original force; If the poetry of the songs is not beautiful, it is at



least flowing ; and, as care has been taken to preserve the images which give the best expression to the music, of which this wonderful composer was surely competent to judge, he would have found it difficult to furnish himself with a translation to better purpose. HOOLE's is the best translation we have, but it has a most forbidding musical aspect. Nor is this declaration at all in favour of ADDISON's assertion that nonsense is best suited to music, for there are many passages in this opera that in idea are grand and beautiful, and lend a powerful help to musical expression. I shall only out of many of these give only one instance.

Behold, on Lethe's dismal strand,  
Thy father's murdered spirit stand ;  
In his face what grief profound :  
See, he rows his haggard eyes,  
And hark ! revenge, revenge, he cries,  
And points to his still bleeding wound.

When it is recollected how these lines are set, and how BEARD sung them, I think the appropriate epithet instead of despicable, which has unsparingly been applied, ought to be exquisite.

In relation to the next piece of ARNE, he cer-

tainly cannot be so well defended. Here he had no METASTASIO to lend him assistance, yet the position of ADDISON is so fairly inverted; that, by having indifferent words to set, he never composed such indifferent music. It was damned on the sixth night, which would have been its fate on the third, but for SHUTER; who, when the galleries were very riotous, seized a moment of suspension and uttered very comically in the language of Justice Clack, "Nay, if we all speak together how shall we hear one another."

KENRICK, who will longer be remembered to his infamy for his unmanly and scandalous attack on GARRICK,\* than to his credit for any work of genius, wrote *Fun*, which was a satirical thing intended to ridicule FIELDING, HILL, and other well known characters; but, FIELDING determined to spoil this same fun of KENRICK, apprehended the actors and the audience on the first, and of course

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\* This unprovoked and impudent libel cannot be forgotten. The business finished by a most servile and pusillanimous concession in the newspapers. He asked a gentleman with his usual effrontery, what he thought of his conduct, "Why, said the gentleman, the public have for these six months considered you as a rascal, and now lest they should be mistaken, you have given it under your hand."



the only, night's performance, which was at the Castle Tavern in Paternoster Row.

*Falstaff's Wedding.* This was a sequel to the second part of *Henry the Fourth*, and written professedly in imitation of SHAKESPEARE. It was an arrogant performance, and must sink to nothing while the English language endures, for so long will SHAKESPEARE'S *Falstaff* be remembered. This play was afterwards altered and performed at LOVE'S benefit to as little purpose as before. The *Widowed Wife*, in which GARRICK assisted the author, who unkindly in return said he had spoiled his play, was performed to bad houses for nine nights. The *Duellist*, taken from FIELDING'S *Amelia*, was damned on the first night. This author also brought out one plot of JOHNSON'S *Country Lasses*, as an opera which, with the help of some Vauxhall music, was performed for a time, and the other plot as a farce which was damned on the second night. As to the rest, KENRICK would write, but it was with difficulty he could procure himself to be read; for, what, between his perpetually filling his head with rancour, and his stomach with brandy, he burnt with envy at the success of every rational man's pursuit, and, by hating every body, was hated by every body.

GENTLEMAN, an author of very poor abilities, wrote and altered the following pieces, *Sejanus*, *The Stratford Jubilee*, the *Sultan*, the *Tobacconist*, the *Coxcombs*, *Cupid's Revenge*, the *Pantheonites*, the *Modish Wife*, *Zaphira*, *Richard the Second*, the *Mentalist*, and the *Fairy Court*, none of which are now known to the stage, and it is of very little consequence that they ever were. REED, a rope maker, wrote the *Superannuated Gallant*, a farce never performed, *Madrigal and Trulletta*, a mock tragedy, performed only one night, and also the *Register Office*, a piece which was written with a very laudable intention, and from which FOOTE stole Mrs. Cole. It was performed for a length of time at Drury Lane, in 1761, and several successive seasons, which considerable applause. *Dido*, a tragedy, was performed three times, and *Tom Jones*, taken of course from FIELDING's novel, was performed with some success.

LOVE, an actor of merit and much respected, whose real name was DANCE, and who was brother to the present City surveyor, and the member for East Grinstead, wrote, for the stage, *Pamela*, 1742, a piece remarkable for nothing but that GARRICK performed in it before he was an actor professionally. The *Village Wedding*, a piece tolerably written, but very thinly constructed, for it contained but



three characters. *Timon of Athens* was by no means an injudicious alteration of SHAKESPEARE'S play. It was only performed at Richmond. The *Ladies Frolick*, which is the *Jovial Crew* cut into a farce, was brought out at Drury Lane in 1770 with tolerable success. The *City Madam* altered from *Maffinger*, was brought forward in 1771, at Richmond. The alterations were judicious, and indeed LOVE had good sense and talents enough to render every thing he undertook respectable.

## CHAP. VI.

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COLMAN, KELLY, LLOYD, Mrs. SHERIDAN,  
Mrs. GRIFFITHS, AND GOLDSMITH.

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I SHALL next speak of COLMAN, as an author of great value to the theatre ; for, though it is clearly apparent that his dramatic pieces were not so well constructed nor operated upon at any time of his life as when he benefited by the advice and assistance of GARRICK ; yet there is a peculiar neatness, a beauty, a correctness, without, however, tameness or vapidness, that has scarcely ever been equalled. He was a kind of English TERENCE, and engrafted classical eloquence upon truth and nature ; indeed MENANDER's salt which is supposed to have evaporated in its passage from Greece to Rome.

The first Dramatic essay of this author was *Polly Honeycomb*, written purposely to bring forward



Miss POPE. The end of warning young girls from that destruction of which they are in danger, from swallowing the mental poison which, to the scandal of the press, is disseminated through the circulating libraries, is well accomplished, and there is something extremely dramatic and perfectly novel in the man's being gradually deserted by his whole family, at the finish. This piece was first performed in 1760.

The *Jealous Wife* was produced in 1761. This is one of the best comedies on the Stage; thanks, however, in great measure to GARRICK; for never was there an occasion where his assistance was more wanted, or rendered more honestly or more effectually. COLMAN was a young author, which will easily be credited, when the reader knows that the *Musical Lady* made originally a part of the *Jealous Wife*. He had the good sense to listen to GARRICK, who took great pains with the task assigned him, and in the performing it evinced great judgment and knowledge of effect. It is generally supposed, that this play was written by COLMAN and GARRICK in conjunction, in the same manner that they wrote the *Clandestine Marriage*, but this is not the fact, GARRICK suggested the alterations, but COLMAN wrote the whole.

Let the public regret the acting of that day, when they are told that Oakly was performed by GARRICK, Major Oakley by YATES, Lord Trinket by O'BRIEN, Sir Harry Beagle by KING, Lady Free-love by Mrs. CLIVE, and Mrs. Oakley by Mrs. PRITCHARD, and that the other characters were proportionably supported.

The *Musical Lady*, 1762, has as good a tendency as *Polly Honeycomb*. Ladies make themselves ridiculous in no way so much as in pretending to understand the science of music, of which it is the study and the interest of their instructors to keep them in the dark, frequently for fear of an investigation of their own ignorance. The plot lies very round, and is most judiciously worked up. KING, YATES, and Miss POPE, very ably supported the piece.

*Philafter* was altered from BEAUMONT and FLETCHER by COLMAN, for the purpose of introducing POWEL on his first appearance. This alteration was made with great good sense, and with an eye strictly to the reputation of the original authors. The assistance given to it by POWEL and Mrs. YATES, was of infinite benefit to the piece. *The Deuce is in Him* was brought out while GAR-



RICK was in Italy, and had good success. It was one of those things in the style of the French after pieces, and was full of that peculiar neatness with which this author always wrote. The plot is partly from *Marmontel*, and partly from a circumstance publicly known at that time.

The *Clandestine Marriage* has been already spoken of. The *English Merchant*, which is a close translation of VOLTAIRE'S *l'Ecoffaise*, was performed at Drury-Lane in 1767. This play is full of sound good sense; but it is too French, and too cold for any great admiration on the English stage: in fact it is gold, and sterling, but is unfashioned. *Lear* was altered from SHAKESPEAR, and with some propriety; but we have already seen why TATE'S alteration will ever have the preference. COLMAN being at this time in the infancy of his Covent-Garden management, he was obliged to buckle to this kind of work, which was not his fort so much as original writing. It was for COLMAN to invent, and for GARRICK to improve; and this is clearly evident here, COLMAN having lost himself very materially as to stage effect from the moment he parted from GARRICK.

The *Oxonian in Town*, in which piece it was

clearly evident that COLMAN was left alone, appeared at Covent-Garden. It very properly attacked a favourite vice; but the *'Squire of Alsatia*, and other similar things, had anticipated all the effect that could be expected from it. It would have quietly sunk to oblivion if some gamblers had not stupidly volunteered themselves as the guardians of Irish honour, which finished by their tacit confession that they were the very outcasts of society that the author meant to detect and punish.

*Man and Wife* was a very injudicious performance. COLMAN ought to have known that nothing could stand against the Spectacle that GARRICK was preparing at Drury-Lane. It must, therefore, naturally lose him reputation. It had, however, the good effect of furnishing GARRICK with the idea in his prologue of comparing the two houses to the two Magpies between Hounslow and Colnbrook. *The Portrait*, taken from *Le Tableau Parlant* of ANSEAU, was a burletta; the music by Dr. ARNOLD. It had very little success. *The Fairy Prince* was a spectacle gathered from SHAKESPEAR, DRYDEN, and GILBERT WEST, and brought out to introduce the ceremony of the Installation of the Knights of the Garter. In this piece Miss BROWN, afterwards the unfortunate Mrs. CARGYL, made her first appearance,



*Comus*, performed in 1772, was of course altered from MILTON. COLMAN would have more obliged the public, and assisted his own reputation, by undertaking some original piece. *Achilles in Petticoats* was an alteration from GAY. It met with very little success. The *Man of Business* is another strong proof that COLMAN felt himself awkward when left alone. It had but very moderate success, notwithstanding he produced it at his own theatre with all the advantages that a manager has in his power to give his own productions. *Epicene*, altered of course from JONSON, is judicious enough, but it had not great success.

*Islington Spa* was brought out at Drury-Lane, after COLMAN had sold his share of the other theatre. It was well written, but it wanted the touch of GARRICK's promethean pencil, which he was not much inclined perhaps to lend after COLMAN's apostacy; for though it is true that COLMAN made money by his Covent-Garden expedition, he certainly would have made more reputation had he staid at Drury-Lane. *New Brooms*, an interlude, at the opening of Drury-Lane theatre, after GARRICK's secession, was of course well received.

The *Spanish Barber*, performed in the Haymarket in the summer of 1777, at which time COLMAN became manager of that theatre, was performed with merited success. It was during that season Miss FARREN, now Countess of DERBY, made her first appearance on the stage. The music of this piece was composed by Dr. ARNOLD. The *Female Cavalier* had no great success; it was altered from the *Artful Husband* of TAVERNER. *Bonduca*, altered from BEAUMONT and FLETCHER, did no great matters. The Company at the Haymarket were not competent to the representation of such a piece.

With the *Suicide* I shall finish an examination of this author's dramatic works. It was performed at the Haymarket in 1778, and was certainly COLMAN's best piece, after the *Clandestine Marriage*, which evidently confirms how much the genius of COLMAN was indebted to the judgement of GARRICK. COLMAN, however, is an author very worthy to be imitated. Chaste, neat, unexaggerated nature, he hit most wonderfully. He was a kind of TENIERS in writing. His figures were small, but they were beautifully finished. They had always the best effect however when they were grouped by GARRICK, who knew their keeping better than the painter did; and yet, though GARRICK knew light



and shade, style and effect, better than COLMAN, without such admirable materials as COLMAN possessed, the public would not have had so much opportunity of benefiting by the judgement of GARRICK.

KELLY, who ought to follow COLMAN at an humble distance, wrote nevertheless for the stage with some success. He happened, fortunately for himself, and unluckily for the public taste, to take advantage of the rage that then prevailed for sentiment. Every thing was at that time sentiment. It was the only secret of writing for success. If a man was to be hanged, or married, out came a sentiment. If a rogue triumphed, or was tossed in a blanket, what an opportunity for a sentiment! If the butler was drunk, or the chambermaid impertinent, listen to a sentiment! In short, if the alderman ate too much custard, or his wife frequented too many routs; if the vice was gaming in the Alley, or at Brooks's, wenching, or drinking; if fortune came unasked, or was deaf to solicitation; if the subject was health or sickness, happiness or misery; hooraw for a sentiment!

*False Delicacy*, 1768, had almost all these requisites; and, that the audience might have enough of

their darling sentiments after they had been delighted with a plentiful number of them in the course of the action, the moment the catastrophe finished, forward came every individual actor and actress, and suspended the fall of the curtain with a sentiment. Nay, so far did this folly prevail, that the critics themselves began to congratulate the world on the restoration of MENANDER, classically conveyed in the manner of the Greek chorus.

*A Word to the Wise*, 1770, was damned on the stage, but the author was remunerated by a large subscription. This failure has been imputed to KELLY's having broached his political opinions pretty freely in the newspapers; but without any outrage of probability or common sense, it would be more natural to impute its failure to the want of merit in the piece, which was miserably bad; besides GOLDSMITH had, before this, balanced the account between nature and sentiment, in which poor sentiment was left minus by a considerable difference.

*Clementina*, a tragedy, by this author, performed at Covent-Garden in 1771, was almost as dull as his sentimental comedy. It set the audience asleep, and therefore they had not spirits enough to damn



it,\* which they nevertheless might have been tempted to have done if it had not been for Mrs. YATES's admirable acting. The *Prince of Agra*, altered from DRYDEN, and also brought out at Covent-Garden, was performed for the benefit of Mrs. LESSINGHAM, but had very little success. This play, and the *School for Wives*, were fathered, out of kindness to KELLY, by a respectable gentleman now at the head of the police, which shews that the public manifest their sentiments, as to plays, without regard to the circumstances or situations of the authors, but merely according to their merits; for this play had no success, and the *School for Wives* not enough to flatter the pretensions of a reputable author.

The *Romance of an Hour* was taken from MAR-MONTEL, and was passable enough; the *Man of Reason* is acknowledged, by KELLY's biographer, to have been inferior to the rest of his works, for which there was no occasion; but yet the failure of it is very kindly attributed to WOODWARD's misconception of the principal character. In short,

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\* A gentleman was asked, after one of the representations of this play, why he did not hiss it? "How the devil could I," said he, "It was impossible! A man cannot hiss and yawn at the same time."

KELLY was but an indifferent writer ; but, by having many companionable qualities, and being ready at all times to render his conduct pleasurable and serviceable to society, both the public and his friends, wherever they properly could, were happy in return to oblige and serve him.

LLOYD, the friend and companion of CHURCHILL and WILKES, was a good writer. His *Aëtor* is a poem of considerable merit ; and proved a bone that wits of high reputation have been happy to nibble at. His dramatic productions however are of no high rank. The *Tears and Triumphs of Parnassus* was merely an ode. *Arcadia*, or the *Shepherd's Wedding*, was a compliment on the nuptials of their Majesties. It was neatly written. The *School for Wives*, from MOLIERE, was printed, but never acted. Indeed it was merely written to shew how far MURPHY had borrowed from the French.

The *Death of Adam* was translated from the German of KLOPSTOCK. It is complained of as a bad translation ; and certainly it is not a good play. The *Capricious Lovers*, to say the truth, is the only piece of LLOYD which can be called in the smallest



degree an acquisition to the stage. It was performed at Drury-Lane while GARRICK was in Italy. The music was composed by RUSH, and it was well acted. The subject was FAVART's *Ninette à la Cour*.

Mrs. SHERIDAN, who had pretensions as a writer greatly beyond those which are possessed by ladies in general, wrote *Sydney Biddulph* for the closet, and for the stage, the *Discovery*, in which there is great nature and spirit; and the *Dupe*, in which indelicacy, a quicksand so often fatal to lady writers, sunk her venture. It has been urged that the audience were too delicate, but this was not the truth, for the *Dupe* was performed in 1763, and the rage for false delicacy did not prevail till 1768.

Mrs. GRIFFITHS was a writer widely different from Mrs. SHERIDAN, for she was a type of the celebrated Mrs. PHILIPS, the never to be enough admired Orinda, even to her Platonic Letters. Her dramatic pieces were the *Platonic Wife*, performed in 1765, and taken from MARMONTEL. It lingered through six nights. *Amana* was a kind of dramatic poem, but it was never acted. The *Double Mistake*

had about the same reception as the *Platonic Wife*. The *School for Rakes*, 1769, was a translation from BEAUMARCHAIS, and proved to be the best of this lady's productions. It was well performed, and had a tolerable run. *A Wife in the Right* exhibited a lady writer in the wrong, for it was performed only one night. It came out at Covent-Garden in 1772. *The Times* gave Mrs. GRIFFITHS a hint that it was time she should leave off writing for the stage. This hint she took, and this piece finished her dramatic career.

GOLDSMITH, who has done honour to English literature; who was the best meaning, strange, good, whimsical creature in the world; whose intentions, though always right, by doing nothing like any body else he executed always wrong; whose writings, which are a mixture of merit and singularity, scarcely had a part that did not contain some trait of himself; who has left two beautiful poems, a sweet ballad, and a charming novel, wrote successfully for the stage, but not up to the standard of his other productions.

*The good natured Man* was brought out at Covent-Garden, exactly at the moment when the public



began to be under the influence of the sentimental mania. There is nothing, however, better than Croker, and the incident of the incendiary letter; but Bailiffs were introduced on the stage, which had been done an hundred times before, and has been an hundred times since, and it was enough that the audience did not like such vulgar acquaintance. There have been times when, if they had been real bailiffs, the managers would have sympathized with the audience. To see however that the public are a very short time deluded when they adopt false taste without consideration, they were glad of the next opportunity GOLDSMITH gave them of laughing away the gloom that had been thrown over their minds by the introduction of an infatuation so totally contrary to the English character.

*She stoops to Conquer* GOLDSMITH considered as a desperate remedy for a desperate disease. It operated effectually; indeed like electricity. The audiences seemed as if they had been at some place the reverse of the Cave of Trophonius, for they went in sad and came out merry. This piece was a good deal abused, and no wonder, for it went to the ruin of dull authors. Its efficacy, however, was con-

firmed ; and, whatever absurdities the public taste may have assumed at times, it has not since then trenched upon the pulpit. GOLDSMITH also altered for QUICK's benefit, the *Grumbler*, from SEDLEY.

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## CHAP. VII.

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CUMBERLAND, BENTLEY, MASON, Mrs. BROOKE,  
Mrs. LENNOX, HULL, O'HARA, HOOLE,  
and VICTOR.

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CUMBERLAND, a well known voluminous writer ; who, besides a prodigious number of different productions, has laboured in the Theatrical vineyard with great earnestness and some reputation, even from 1761, to the present moment, brought out, during the period to which my strictures extend, thirteen dramatic pieces.

The *Banishment of Cicero*, 1761, was offered to GARRICK, but not accepted. The business of Clodius and his sister, and the debauching of Pompey's wife in the temple of Juno, were not to be tolerated. It was in fact, though strongly written in many parts, evidently an inexperienced

production, and therefore, the manager, in refusing it, did his duty by the public. The *Summer's Tale* was an opera, performed at Covent Garden Theatre in 1765. It was too heavy for a comic opera, and therefore was called a comedy with songs. The music was an Italian selection, but it was in general dull and ill chosen. This piece was cut down to a farce, but it did as little in that form as at first.

The *Brothers* was performed at Covent Garden, 1769, and received considerable applause. The *West Indian*, by infinite degrees the best production of this author, was performed at Drury Lane in 1771. Mr. CUMBERLAND had by this time seen, that recourse must be had to other authors if any expectations of success were formed by him with safety. He had tried this expedient with effect in the *Brothers*, which were *Tom Jones* and *Bliss*, and here he was determined not to inconvenience himself; but I do not mean this as reproach, since CAMPLEY's generosity, and other circumstances in the *Funeral*, the *Twin Rivals*, and other plays, so whetted his theatrical knife, that it carved a most entertaining play, which, in spite of a great deal of affected language, created interest and afforded pleasure.



*Timon of Athens* was an alteration from SHAKESPEAR, and performed at Drury Lane, in 1771, with but little success. The *Fashionable Lover* came out the same season, but it was a most injudicious play and contained such a mixture of the *Conscious Lovers*, *False Delicacy*, *Taste*, and *Clarissa Harlowe*, that it was impossible for any thing to be more heterogeneous; and, to add to the other misfortunes of this comedy, MOODY was brought forward to perform a Scotchman. The *Note of Hand*, a farce, had some success, but was not equal to the after-pieces of MURPHY or COLMAN, The *Choleric Man* was very much attacked by the critics, which brought out an irascibility from the author which has been ever since played upon. Let no man write unless he can know how to treat calumny with contempt.

The *Battle of Hastings*, performed at Drury Lane in 1778, turned out the battle of the critics, who had certainly too much reason on their side. They alledged that the truth of history had been violated, and that a perpetual imitation of SHAKESPEAR exhibited the writing of this author, as indeed it would of any other, to a disadvantage; not however that it is not tolerated and praised too by

authors of the present day. The fact is, the public had been taught to expect too much from this play, which was certainly a strange incongruous business. Any man might have sworn that the *West Indian* would have been the be all, and the end all with this gentleman. When a man finishes a work with saying "this is well but I shall make the next better," it is a thousand to one but he succeeds; if he pronounces that nothing in its way can go beyond it, he speaks truth as to himself, for he will not exceed it again.

BENTLEY, son of the celebrated Dr. BENTLEY, wrote a piece, in the nature of the old Italian comedy, called the *Wishes*, which, as we have seen, was performed at Drury Lane, during that Summer that MURPHY and FOOTE had the management of it. It was odd, extravagant and eccentric, but there was something so novel in making the whole pantomimic family speak, when we had been accustomed to be entertained only with their attitudes and jesticulation, that the public knew not how to take it. This helped its fate which was however accelerated by its want of plan, connection, and interest. BENTLEY also wrote *Philodamus*, a kind of tragedy, on which GRAY has written a most



elaborate eulogium; but the best that can be said of it is, that it may be passable in the closet, but it would be intolerable on the stage.

MASON, a sweet and beautiful writer, and a man universally beloved and esteemed, wrote *Elfrida*, and *Caractacus*, neither of which pieces were intended for the stage, they were brought out, assisted by the music of ARNE, and though it is both natural and proper to prefer regular tragedy, as time and custom has established it, yet it was a compliment to the stage and a proof of COLMAN's classical discrimination to bring forward *Elfrida*, though not so well altered by him as it was afterwards by the author. In this kind of tragedy, *Caractacus* is the best because the catastrophe is more noble, more elevated, and the distress is heightened by a consideration that valour suffers for Patriotism, and that history is not violated.

In *Elfrida* the punishment is hard, but it is the punishment of treason, and truth is outraged, by making ELFRIDA retire to a convent, rather fondly by the way than religiously, while recollection busily reminds us, that the real ELFRIDA married the KING who murdered her husband. Again, a chorus of Druids, who were professionally bards, is superior

both naturally and musically to a chorus of virgins; but on the other hand, domestic woe always makes the deepest impression, and the lyric part of *Elfrida* is better written for music than that of *Charactacus*.\*

Mrs. BROOKE, who has written many novels that have been well received by the world, if that be a criterion of merit, wrote also a tragedy, the only production I am entitled to mention here, called *Virginia*. Mrs. LENNOX stands upon much the same foundation as to reputation as Mrs. BROOKE. Her Dramatic pieces are *Philander*, never performed; the *Sister*, performed one night only, in 1769, at Covent-Garden, and *Old City Manners*, altered from *Eastward Hoe*, and performed with very little applause at Drury-Lane.

HULL, whose various merits as author, actor, and manager, have long been known to the public, produced the following dramatic pieces. The

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\* I am competent to give an answer to all those who have expressed great astonishment that MASON never wrote a regular tragedy, by assuring the reader, that he himself told me, at Aston in Yorkshire, that he had then in his bureau two tragedies, written agreeable to the usage of the English theatre, but that they never should be produced, owing to the trouble and pain he had experienced from the folly and caprice of managers.



*Twins* altered from the *Comedy of Errors*, and performed with success; the *Absent Man*, performed once; *Pharnaces*, an opera, set by BATES, and performed at Drury-Lane, while GARRICK was in Italy. The *Spanish Lady* performed for the author's benefit in 1765; *All in the Right* from DESTOUCHES, also performed for the author's benefit; the *Perplexities*, a comedy, that deserved its title, for there never was so perplexed a plot, which was taken from TUKE'S *Adventures of Five Hours*, and in which BEARD sung, spoke, and with his usual philanthropy did every thing else in his power to serve his friend; and the *Fairy Favour*, a trifle performed in 1767, for the entertainment of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

HULL also wrote or rather fashioned into an opera, the *Royal Merchant* from BEAUMONT and FLETCHER. The music was by LINLEY. It had but little success. Some of the songs were taken into the *Camp*, a piece performed at Drury-Lane in 1778, and supposed to have been written by the Manager of that Theatre, at which time the public received them as we have seen with rapture, when they had passed them by with indifference at Covent-Garden, so much fascination is there some times in a great name. *Rosamond* was a wonderful favorite for some

time, wonderful, I say, because perhaps nothing could have been more insufferably dull, but the story did the business. Queen ELENOR's poisoned bowl and dagger penetrated to the very back of the upper gallery. *Edward and Eleonora* was altered from THOMPSON but it did nothing; *Love will find out the Way*, an opera, and the *Victim* a tragedy, finish Mr. HULL's works neither of which experienced much success.

O'HARA, through whose pieces we have been taught to admire the native Irish melodies, produced *Midas*, the *Golden Pippin*, and *April Day*, original burlettas; and translated the *Two Misers*, from FENOILLOT, and altered *Tom Thumb* from FIELDING. *Midas*, in which there was certainly much excellent humour, and fair burlesque, was by infinite degrees the best of these pieces.

HOOLE, who translated METASTASIO, altered three of that admirable author's operas into tragedies, which producing a new effect by ending happily, received considerable applause. It was only an innovation, however, for they completely exhibited an anticlimax, and lowered in proportion as the novelty wore off. These tragedies are *Cyrus*, *Timanthes*, and *Cleonice*. It is worthy of remark that this new



era of tragedy began with sentimental comedy, *Cyrus* being the companion of *False Delicacy*, and brought out in 1768.

VICTOR, more celebrated as a theatrical treasurer than a theatrical writer, produced, however, several things of different descriptions. He altered, most miserably, SHAKESPEAR'S *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; *Altemira*, a tragedy, was published but never performed. The *Fatal Error*, a soft name for the commission of adultery, altered from HEYWOOD'S *Woman Killed with Kindness*, was also never performed. The *Fortunate Peasant*, taken from MARIVAUX'S *Payfan Parvenu*, shared the same fate and so did the *Sacrifices*.

## CHAP. VIII.

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SHERIDAN, JEPHSON, BATE, MISS MORE, BUR-  
GOYNE, KING, ANDREWS, MRS. COWLEY,  
AND HOLCROFT.

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AS I profess to close this work at the death of GARRICK, to which period we are now hastening, and, as the authors of whom I have lately spoken produced theatrical exhibitions after that event, as well as those whose names are placed at the head of this chapter, I shall merely have opportunity to speak of the nature and tendency of their different merits, and review such pieces as they produced up to 1779.

SHERIDAN, a man of most commanding talents, would have stood inferior to very few writers, on this or any other similar list, had his time been entirely devoted to the theatre; for, in that case, as genius loves to spread and expand, and seldom fa-



tisfies itself with adopting when it can have opportunity of traversing the wide range of invention, the public would no doubt have seen original tragedies and comedies, such as might have served as models for the imitation of authors not so happily gifted, instead of scenes, hints, and circumstances, most ingeniously wrought together indeed, but as far as any thing on the stage from originality.

This is a fact so universally known, and so constantly admitted, that it has been often argued upon. It has been said that there is not in nature a new character, nor a new sentiment, and all that can be done is to take old matter and give it a novel appearance. That it is safer to do so I will not deny; for certainly, when any thing comes in contact with the imagination that has been familiar to it, without consideration, we give credit for its merit upon the spot, whatever we may do upon reflection; and, having once praised a thing, a false pride prevents us from discovering that we were deceived. It must not be believed that CONGREVE'S *bon mots* were all impromptus; and it is a literal fact that some of JOE MILLER'S best jests are stolen from the ancients; but when this is allowed, it will yet be granted, that Mr. SHERIDAN could have in-

vented incidents as good as those he has borrowed.

This is confirmed by this author's first production, the *Rivals*; which, though Lydia Languish, Falkland and his Mistress, and some other characters, are copies instead of portraits, is the most original of his plays, and by many of the judicious thought the best. It was nearly damned on the first night; and he is said to have remarked to a friend, as he withdrew it, "I have now got the last, and it shall be my fault next time if I don't make the shoe to fit." His labour, however, being only cobbler's work, it required too much method for his volatile genius to buckle to. For the rest, the adopted passages are not judicious; for Polly Honeycomb was better in its former place. The Nutbrown Maid is only fit for the poem she adorns; for though her language on the stage is full of sweetness and delicacy, it is no more appropriate than would be the fine strokes of a miniature painter in the finishing of flats and wings. Being, therefore, neither wholly original, nor wholly imitation, this piece stands like this author's own simile, in the *Duenna*, of the wall between church and synagogue, for it is part natural and part incongruous.



We shall see that Mr. SHERIDAN completely got rid of the original part of the system in his next piece. In the *Duenna* there is not a single new situation from beginning to end. The whole of the plot of turning the Daughter out of doors is conjointly the *Sicilienne* of MOLIERE and *Il Filosofo di Campagna*, where every circumstance is to be found from the serenade in the first scene to the marriage in the last.

In *Il Filosofo di Campagna* a father insists on his daughter's marrying to please him, and refuses her the man of her heart, which trouble she gets rid of by palming her maid on the object of her aversion, to which maid in the end he is actually married; and it is impossible but the equivoques in one piece must be extremely similar to those in the other. It must be allowed there is more humour, or, if you will, farce in the *Duenna*, than in the other piece, but not so much nature; for the countryman might be supposed without difficulty to mistake a smart country lass for his friend's daughter, whereas it is a very strong violence on probability to make Isaac mistake the *Duenna* for Louisa; one he is told is twenty years old, and the other he must know to be sixty.

The business of Ferdinand and Clara is the *Wonder*. Clara elopes, Louisa keeps the secret; Isabella elopes, Violante keeps the secret; Louisa is the sister of Ferdinand, so is Isabella of Don Felix; Lissardo is threatened sword in hand by Don Felix, so is Isaac by Ferdinand; Don Felix quarrels with his sister's lover, so does Ferdinand; Don Felix mistakes Isabella veiled for Violante, so does Ferdinand mistake Louisa for Clara; nay, so closely is the wonder copied, that Lissardo's anxiety to get Gibby a drubbing is apparent in Isaac's telling Ferdinand that he may cut Antonio's throat and welcome.

Father Paul is MARMONTEL's *Philosophe soi disant*, who, as he sits at a feast and inveighs against gormandizing, actually says, as he entreats a lady to help him to some nicety at table, "Can't we be "satisfied with the wholesome roots of the earth?" and laments, after drinking a glass of Burgundy, that people will not be content, like our forefathers, "with the chrystal stream." But the circumstance that proves this author as fallible as any other is, that he has made the *Critic* laugh at the *Duenna*; for the clock strikes four at the beginning of the *Tragedy rehearsed*, which, according to the



dedication, professes to be critical, with a view of course to ridicule the unity of time; and it strikes three at the beginning of the *Duenna*, intending, without doubt, to mark that unity as a beauty.

The poetry, though seldom original, is every where neat and flowing, and well suits the beautiful music, partly selected, and partly from LINLEY, which proved of infinite advantage to the piece. It was, however, very fortunate both for the author and the musician that the rage for catches and glees prevailed a good deal at that time, otherwise the public might have thought it a little out of place to make the characters express their happiness by singing anthems. It has the effect of reviving false delicacy by setting sentiment to music. It is impossible to omit in this place that the beautiful glee of "How merrily we live," was rehearsed, and thrown aside under an idea that it would have no effect.

As to the dialogue of this piece it is lively, pointed, and pertinent. It has not the ease of VANBURGH, the neatness of FARQUHAR, nor the wit of CONGREVE, and yet it has something of them all. It is managed with the cunning of a painter who does not imitate any particular artist, but who

copies the school. The aside speeches of Isaac, shewing before hand, and without his knowledge how easily he is himself to be taken in by his different attempts to cheat others, convey the most artful species of anticipation that ever was practised, and shew a judgment of theatrical effect, powerful, new and extraordinary.

The *School for Scandal* is no more original than the *Duenna*. The school itself is CONGREVE'S *Cabal*, and the play may fairly be called A Sequel to the *Way of the World*. The scandal has been all detailed in different pieces, but principally in the *Plain Dealer*, where in Novel, Lord Plausible, Olivia, and Eliza will be found, Sir Benjamin, Crab, Lady Sneerwell and Mrs. Candour. The brothers have been in a variety of productions from the *Adelphi* to fifty other things; but the *Squire of Alsatia*, on the stage, and *Tom Jones*, in the closet, contain the closest resemblances. The Uncle, lately returned from abroad and introduced to the drunken company, and the sale of the pictures, are extremely like the intriguing chambermaid, which was taken from *Destouches*.\* The reserving the Uncle's picture is in a

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\* "We have sold every thing," says the drunken Colonel: "What, all my pictures?" says the father: "Oh, damme, they went first," cried the Colonel.



French piece, called *L'Ecole de la Jeunesse*; Joseph, and Lady Teazle, are Constant, and Lady Brute, but with an infinitely worse argument on the side of the gallant, and less provocation on the side of the lady, for it would be a species of ingratitude dangerous to risk, even in fiction, for Lady Teazle to swerve even in the remotest degree from her duty, whereas Lady Brute has more provocation to justify her wavering fidelity than any wife on the stage. Thus upon the principle that men had better be born fortunate than rich, so it is profitable to theatrical writers to use penetration, rather than genius.

The dialogue of the *School for Scandal* is in general admirable, but it is expressly warped in places for the purpose of procuring that applause as ADDISON calls it which proceeds from the head rather than the heart. HERON, the critic, points out several of these tinsel ornaments, which he tells you are known by the name of Clap traps, and, in particular instances, the speech of Charles to Rowley, who tells him to observe the old proverb, and to be just before he is generous, "Why, so I  
" would," says Charles, "if I could; but justice  
" is an old lame hobbling beldame, and I can't  
" get her to keep pace with generosity for the soul

“ of me.” This sentiment, which half the audiences to this play have received with the loudest applause, is, he tells us, and he tells us truly, false and immoral, and that no reprobation can be too severe for it; and nothing can be more sterling reason, for the money that a man holds who has not paid his debts is not his, and therefore it is not in his power to bestow it; but these are errors easily in this author’s power to rectify, and it is truly to be lamented that either indolence or avocation should check the exertions of talents which are so reputable to himself, so gratifying to the public, and so honourable to literature.

JEPHSON, a gentleman I believe greatly courted and beloved by his private friends, produced *Briganza*, a piece written with considerable judgment and good poetic effect. The scene of the Monk, though evidently an imitation of King John and Hubert, is uncommonly beautiful and highly wrought. The resemblance of this play to *Venice Preserved* in the end injured its success, though it was well received and frequently repeated during the first season, which was in 1775. The *Law of Lombardy*, 1779, was performed but nine nights. It was much inferior to *Briganza*.



BATE DUDLEY, a gentlemen who has written more for his amusement, than, for the sake of the public, he ought to have done, produced for the stage, *Henry and Emma*, performed for Mrs. HARTLEY's benefit, in 1774. *The Rival Candidates*, an after-piece at Drury Lane, 1775, which had creditable success. *The Blackamoor Washed White*, 1776, which was damned, as it was generally understood, by a party created by the author's political disputes, and the *Fitch of Bacon*, performed at the Haymarket, in 1778, which was frequently in that season, and has been since performed repeatedly with considerable success.

Miss MORE, who, as a writer and a school mistress, is well known, produced a dramatic pastoral called, *A Search after Happiness*, only recited by young ladies in the manner of RACINE's *Athalie*; *The Inflexible Captive*, a tragedy, performed one night at Bath; *Percy* another tragedy, performed at Covent Garden, which had considerable success, and *Fatal Falsehood* which was exhibited only three nights.\*

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\* Nothing can be more ridiculous than literary quarrels even among men, but when ladies, fearful lest their poetic offsprings should crawl through life unheeded, publicly expose themselves to the world, in order to

BURGOYNE, the Saratoga General produced before GARRICK's death, the *Maid of the Oaks*; which, with the assistance of GARRICK, was made into a very entertaining performance. There was a good deal of CIBBER in this author's dialogue; and had he oftener tried his hand, while he had opportunity of deriving assistance from so able a friend, he certainly would have been a respectable playwright.

KING, who has sometimes amused himself with writing, and never without success, produced a

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ascertain their beauty and legitimacy, who does not wish they had occupied their time with a needle instead of a pen. The attention of the world was called, when *Fatal Falschhood* came out, to a newspaper dispute between Miss MORE and Mrs. COWLEY, who brought out a tragedy called *Albina*. Miss MORE "was penetrated with the deepest regret at being "compelled to take a step so repugnant to her own feelings, and the "delicacy of her sex, but her moral character had been grossly attacked, "and she felt herself under the necessity of solemnly declaring that she "had never seen, heard or read a single line of Mrs. COWLEY's tragedy." Mrs. COWLEY in reply said, "that she wished Miss MORE had been "still more sensible of the indelicacy of a newspaper altercation between "women, and of the ideas of ridicule that the world are apt to attach to "such unsexual hardiness. She says," in her preface, "she has only "related events, and is truly sorry to find that Miss MORE can not only "be angry, but, when she is angry, she can be very unpolite." Had these foolish ladies no friend to prevent their making themselves a town talk? what were they cavilling about after all? One of these plays was withdrawn on the third night, and the other was performed but once and then scarcely heard to an end.



musical piece called *Love at first Sight*; and a farce called *Wit's last Stake*, both at Drury Lane.

ANDREWS, a most curious and singular author, a kind of dramatic cuckoo, with this difference, that after he took possession of the nests of other writers, and sucked the eggs of their imaginations, instead of being able to produce any of his own, sat upon the shells expecting to hatch ideas after the substance and the vital speck were gone. I thank chance that I have only to speak of three non entities produced by this gunpowder merchant, all which have long since flown in fumo. The *Election*, a trifling interlude, which proved him a very unpromising candidate for the public favour, the *Conjuror*, at which title was levelled the pun of the day to the disadvantage of the author, and Belphegor, the acquaintance of which devil he seems to have courted in order that he might be familiar with damnation.

Mrs. COWLEY, of whose temper we have just now seen a specimen in her squabble with Miss MORE, wrote the *Run-away*, a comedy, and *Who's the Dupe*, a farce, before the time my task expires. The comedy was touched a good deal by GARRICK; and, being of a sprightly kind and having nothing

particular to offend, it had the usual success of that description of pieces. The farce was a much better thing. It was performed with reputable success.

HOLCROFT, a most extraordinary author, has written a great deal, has been greatly encouraged, and yet has done nothing for literature; because, perhaps, he has done little for morality, less for truth, and nothing for social order. His only dramatic work, that comes under my examination, is a trifling opera, called the *Crisis*, which was performed for a benefit.



## CHAP. IX

INFERIOR AUTHORS.

I SHALL now, in a summary way, take up those authors that remain, just as they come to hand, without respect of persons. Indeed it is impossible for me to be very prolix, for they amount to upwards of ninety; and I must reserve as much room as possible to bring this history to that sort of roundness which it will require the relation of many particulars to effect.

CRANE, a weaver at Manchester, contrived to manufacture a collection of poems; among which he published two tragedies, called the *Female Parricide*, and *Saul and Jonathan*. POTTINGER was a sober bookseller, till STEVENS's lecture on heads set him literally mad for lecturing and writing plays. During his lucid intervals he produced the *Methodist*, a comedy; and the *Humourous Quarrel*, a farce.

DELAP, a clergyman, brought out at Drury-Lane a tragedy, which had but little success, called *Hecuba*. COOK, an author more mad than POTTINGER, produced the *King cannot Err*, and the *Hermit Converted*.

HARRIS, whose *Hermes*, and some other works, are deservedly celebrated, wrote the *Spring*, a pastoral, which was performed at Drury-Lane. PERCY, well known by his reliques of ancient English poetry, produced a piece, of no great merit however, called, *The Little Orphan of China*. WIGNELL, an under actor, who was remarkable for making tragedy comic and comedy tragic, and was in consequence a wonderful favorite with the bumpkins in the country,\* was as much a *traverse* at writing as at acting. His attempts were a farce, called *Love's Artifice*; and a masque, called the *Triumph of Hymen*. GRAHAM, a schoolmaster, wrote *Telemachus*, and some other play, which GARRICK refused. BAKER, celebrated for compiling the Playhouse Dictionary,

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\* WIGNELL was fishing at some place in the country when some clowns came by, and could not but admire the pompous dexterity with which he played with his prey. "There, there!" said one. "Let un aloane," said another, "if a do but fish as well as he does act, he wunna leave a fish in the mill dam."



wrote a dramatic poem, acted at Edinburgh, called the *Muse of Ossian*. MRS. LUTTER, a shopkeeper at Reading, who neglected her business to write plays, published a tragedy called the *Siege of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian*. DOWNING, a true strolling actor, wrote *Newmarket*, a farce; and the *Parthian Exile*, a tragedy.

The celebrated SCHOMBERG, GARRICK's great favourite as a physician, could however find no favour with him as an author, for he repeatedly refused to perform his pieces. One was a farce, called the *Death of Bucephalus*; another a burletta, called the *Judgement of Paris*; and the third, and last, a tragedy, called *Romulus and Herselia*. CARR is only known by having a hand in a tragedy called *Eugenia*. POTTER wrote a trifling piece called the *Choice of Apollo*. DENIS, son of a French refugee, translated the *Siege of Calais* from BELLOY. ASPINAL published a tragedy called the *Brothers*, done according to his own words from CORNEILLE. CUNNINGHAM, wrote a pastoral, called the *Royal Shepherds*. OSBORNE, an artist, who rendered himself celebrated by painting a fish with wings, a calf with six legs, the ghastly Miller of Billericay, and other provincial monsters, but who however was possessed of considerable merit, attempted, with toler-

able success, to unite poetry with painting, by writing a piece called the *Midnight Mistake*.

BOURGEOIS is supposed to be a fictitious name, but it stands before two plays, called the '*Squire Burlesqued*, and the *Disappointed Coxcomb*. SADLER, a Shropshire man, wrote at Shrewsbury a piece called the *Merry Miller*. THOMPSON, whose nautical character is well known, and who was distinguished early in life by the title of Poet of the Stews, wrote, for the stage, the *Hobby Horse*, an indifferent piece; brought out for BENSLEY's benefit; the *Fair Quaker*, altered from the *Fair Quaker of Deal*, and brought out with great care by GARRICK; the *Syrens*, an unsuccessful masque; and *St. Helena*, performed at Drury-Lane only one night. This gentleman is said also to have written the *Seraglio*, performed at Covent-Garden in 1776; but though this intelligence is reiterated and many circumstances concerning it, to my knowledge, it is every word false, and that the person in question had not seen a single word of the piece when it was put into the hands of Mr. HARRIS. I only mention this to shew the wonderful consistency of theatrical historians.

ROGERS, an officer in the army, published a piece the subject of which he was perhaps a judge



of, but it must have been Cherokee language to us. It was called *Ponteach* and the scene lay in America. CAREY, well known as a writer, and a lecturer, produced the *Inoculator*, the *Cottagers*, *Liberty Chastised*, *Shakespeare's Jubilee*, *Three Old Women Weatherwise*, the *Magic Gridle*, and the *Nutbrown Maid*. One of these pieces was I believe performed at the Haymarket, and another at Marybone Gardens. LANGHORNE, a clergyman, is said most pathetically to have lamented the death of his wife, and to have washed away his sorrow by large libations of Burton ale; and, in those moments of melancholy, to have written a tragedy called the *Fatal Prophecy*. Mrs. WILLIAMS, the blind pensioner of Dr. JOHNSON, translated METATASIO'S *Uninhabited Island*. WISE wrote the *Coronation of David*, and *Nadir*, neither of which were performed. COCKINGS produced the *Conquest of Grenada*.

Dr. BURNEY, an ingenious and elegant writer, whose *History of Music* is full of general enquiry, and sound knowledge, translated ROUSSEAU'S dry and correct piece *Le Devin de Village*; and, that it might be as cold and dull as it was in the French, the original music was preserved. It was called the *Cunning Man*. ROUSSEAU was in England and

heard it performed, but he had the mortification to find that nobody was cunning enough to find out the merit of it. TOMS, a hanger on of Lord Sandwich, brought out at Covent Garden, through the interest of SIMPSON, the *Hautboy Player*, a very poor translation of *La Buona Figliola* with PICCINI'S music.

JACKSON produced an alteration of MILTON'S *Lycidas*, as a subject of condolence on the death of the Duke of York, which was performed but one night. THORNTON translated the comedies of PLAUTUS. HARTSON wrote the *Countess of Salisbury*. It was originally performed in Ireland, and, with the support of the BARRYS afterwards at Drury Lane, but did not prevail so as to be a favourite. HAZARD, the original proprietor of the Lottery Office, known now by the firm of HAZARD and Co. determined to get as much as possible acquainted with his name by venturing in a lottery where he was not so adroit in calculating the chances. His ticket however, which was a masque, called *Redo-wald*, did not go into the theatrical wheel.

BOULTON, probably a Liverpool Guinea captain, wrote the *Sailor's Farewel*, or the *Guinea Outfit*. DOSSIE, principal secretary to the society for the



encouragement of Arts and Manufactures, wrote a poor piece called the *Statesman Foiled*. WALPOLE, the celebrated author of the *Castle of Otranto*, which, as if it had been magical spawn, has engendered all the mysteries, enchantments, monsters, and every other species of extraneous and heterogeneous outrage on probability and nature, that has ever since been the delight and terror of weak minds, wrote also a tragedy, most shockingly revolting, called the *Mysterious Mother*. Nothing can be so dangerous as such employment for men of talents. Monsters of the mind, like all other monsters should be smothered. It was greatly to the honour of the theatre and its manager that this piece was refused. If the theatre should get on however the same pace it is now going. these sentiments may in a few years be thought mere squeamishness.

Dow, who wrote on oriental subjects, produced a tragedy called *Zingis*, and another called *Sethona*, neither of which had any great success. HARROD, a Kentish man, produced a tragedy called the *Patriot*. It was never acted. JERES, translated a part of Voltaire, and published a tragedy called *Richard in Cyprus*. WEST wrote, for the Dublin theatre, a tragedy called *Ethelinda*. HORDE pub-

lished, according to one account, thirteen dramatic pieces, and according to all others only one melancholy business, an opera, called *Damon and Phæbe*. The reader will have no objection to my taking the majority upon this fact.

ARMSTRONG, the celebrated author of the *Art of Preserving Health*, a poem of uncommon merit, wrote a tragedy, which however was refused by GARRICK, called the *Forced Marriage*. Mrs. BURTON, an actress, brought out a poor ricketty thing called *Fashion Displayed*. JENNER, a clergyman, wrote, to eke out some poems, two dramatic pieces called *Lucinda*, and the *Man of Family*. The best is from DIDEROT. HOWARD, who though a lawyer has piqued himself upon not having in the whole course of his life, written a single syllable to the prejudice of his neighbour or the peace of society; and, to keep up this idea perhaps of being completely a harmless character, he has written three tragedies, than which nothing can be more perfectly inoffensive; for they exercise no other feeling than patience, and therefore inculcate a very wholesome doctrine. These pieces are called *Almeyda*, the *Siege of Tamor*, and the *Female Gamester*.



SHEPHERD, a clergyman, wrote two dramatic pieces, neither of which however were performed, called *Hector*, and *Bianca*. STOCKDALE, who, by GARRICK's interest, was appointed chaplain of a man of war, translated TASSO's *Amintas*. Mrs. CELISIA, who was daughter to MALLETT, and married a Genoese, brought out a piece without success called *Almida*. FADE, a strolling player in Ireland, brought a piece there stolen from CIBBER, called the *Miraculous Cure*. Mrs. PENNY published in a volume of poems a piece called the *Birth Day*. MEILON, a very indifferent writer, published three things called *Emilia*, *Northumberland*, and the *Friends*. BRIDGES, brought out at the Haymarket a thing, which he principally took from COTTON, who translated VIRGIL, called *Dido*. It was not ill written in some parts, but it was strangely undramatic. He wrote another piece called the *Dutchman*. These productions were neither very creditable, nor very profitable.

CRADDOCK brought out at Covent Garden, a tragedy, called *Zobeide*. This piece is altered from VOLTAIRE's *Les Scythes*, for which compliment VOLTAIRE gave CRADDOCK his thanks, a tribute easily obtained from a man whose whole soul

was vanity. The play was not heightened sufficiently to succeed. O'BRIEN, the actor, who married into LORD INCHQUIN's family, and, to the regret of the public, left the stage very young, brought out at Covent Garden, *Cross Purposes*, a very pleasant farce, taken from *Les Trois Freres* of LA FONT; and at Drury Lane, a comedy, called the *Duel*, taken from the *Philosophe sans les Sçavoir* of SEDAINÉ;\* this piece was damned. HARDHAM, whose trade was a diamond cutter, his employ a snuffman, and his amusement a numberer of Drury Lane Theatre, caught the cacoethes from the last employ, and wrote a piece, which GARRICK prudently advised him to keep in the back ground, called the *Fortune Tellers*. HARDHAM was a great favourite of GARRICK, and was remarkably liberal and benevolent, particularly to members of the theatre.

WALDRON, the actor, produced the *Maid of Kent*, the *Contrast*, and the *Richmond Heiress*.

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\* It is remarkable that when the Critics read SEDAINÉ's piece, they made exactly the same objections to it which were made in England. It was therefore not performed at Court. The author nevertheless ventured a representation of it at the theatre, where it received great applause, and in particular in those parts where the critics had condemned it.



AscouGH, well known in the gay world, brought out a translation of VOLTAIRE'S *Semiramis*, which could not possibly have succeeded, it was so very weak. To make amends, however, SHERIDAN adorned it with a most exquisitely written prologue. CHATTERTON, known by his genius and his misfortunes, wrote, not intended however for the stage, the *Tournament*, *Ella*, *Goddwyn*, and the *Dowager*. PILLON, an author who has written with creditable success, produced before GARRICK'S death, the *Invasion*, which was a successful farce, that answered a temporary purpose.

The remaining dramatic efforts, which it is within my promise to record, are of so tiny a nature, that it will be in their favour to make them visible by seeing them in a swarm. I shall therefore only notice their titles, and their authors, the names of some of which, are, however, respectable, without any particular comment, on purpose to shew that I have a pleasure in obliging my readers. TOOSEY wrote *Sebastian*, a tragedy. MACKENZIE, the *Prince of Tunis*, a tragedy, and the *Shipwreck*, a tragedy. WARNER completed THORNTON'S translation of *Plautus*. KEATE wrote the *Monument in Arcadia*. HITCHCOCK wrote for the York theatre, two comedies, called the *Macaroni*,

and the *Coquet*. GAMBOLD wrote the *Martyrdom of Ignatius*. STEWART produced the *Two English Gentlemen*.

RIDLEY wrote two tragedies ; they were called *Jugurtha*, and the *Fruitless Redress*. PIGUENET, brought out *Don Quixote*. DOBBS produced the *Patriot King*. LADY STRATHMORE wrote a tragedy called the *Siege of Jerusalem*. WALLIS produced at York the *Mercantile Lovers*. HEARD, the *Snuff Box*, and *Valentine's Day*. FORREST, the *Weathercock*. HODSON, *Arfaces* and *Zoraida*, tragedies, and the *Adventures of a Night*, a farce. DALTON produced a farce, called *Honour Rewarded*. JACKSON, *Elfrid*, *Geralda*, the *British Heroine*, and *Sir William Wallace*, all tragedies. JACKMAN brought out the *Milesian*, and *All the World's a Stage*.

COLLIER wrote *Selima and Azor*, set by LINLEY. LUND produced *Ducks and Peas*. VAUGHAN brought out at Drury Lane, *Love's Metamorphoses*, and the *Double Valet*. POTTER translated *ÆSCHYLUS* and *EURIPIDES*. MRS. GARDENER brought out at the HayMarket, the *Advertisement* and the *Female Dramatist*. MRS. RYVES wrote the *Prude*, and the *Triumph of Hymen*. WARBOYS, the *Preceptor*, and the *Rival Lovers*. JERNINGHAM wrote *Margaret of*



*Anjou.* Dr. DODD, the *Syracusan*. GREEN, the *Secret Plot*. RICHARDS, the *Device*. VANDERSTOP, altered the *Gentle Shepherd*, from RAMSAY. HOUGH wrote *Second Thought is Best*; Mrs. ROBINSON produced the *Lucky Escape*, Lady CRAVEN, the *Sleepwalker*. HILL, the *Gospel Shop*. WILLET, *Buxom Joan*; and Mrs. BOOTH, the *Little French Lawyer*.

In addition to these, which I can particularise, I count twenty-seven Dramatic pieces which are doubtfully attributed, and one hundred and seventy-nine considered as anonymous; so that I have now, in the course of this history, given an account of more than eight hundred dramatic writers, and about three thousand one hundred pieces of different descriptions. The number of authors in France, during the same period, are above nine hundred and fifty, and their pieces amount in number to nearly four thousand five hundred, so that they have a considerable advantage in point of number; but I fancy the warmest admirer of French Literature will agree without scruple that, when the quality of the manufacture is taken into consideration, we shall find an immense ballance in our favour in point of value.

## CHAP. X.

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ACTORS.

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I GET now to a critical part of my task. I am to shew what the merits of those actors were who comprised the school of GARRICK, to see by comparison whether they equalled or excelled the actors before, and at the time of BETTERTON, and to ascertain by deduction how much the acting of the present day has gradually fallen off since it has been obliged to pick up its intelligence without any acknowledged preceptor.

With what ability I shall execute this task let my readers judge. I confess I undertake it with a mixture of pleasure and reluctance: pleasure, because I think it has been almost already proved that the acting of GARRICK's pupils was superior to that of BETTERTON's, and reluctance, because I



am afraid it is but too apparent that, when nature shall have destroyed the few remaining traces of that admirable and difficult art, the secret will be wholly lost.

I know I have to guard myself against early prejudice, and to use every caution, lest I mistake unqualified admiration for fixed judgment. Errors, imbibed in youth, are certainly difficult to irradiate; but these are generally single and unconfirmed. They have their source in the fancy, not in the heart; they are beautiful to the sight, but shrink at the touch; in the absence of reason, they excite pleasure, but reflection shames us into an acknowledgement of the delusion. On the contrary, when the senses receive those pleasures which the mind approves, when reiterated deliberation confirms that delight which takes possession of the susceptible soul, nothing palls, nothing fatiates; repetition reveals new beauties, and the enjoyment which was born from admiration bears the test of time and accompanies the mind to maturity.

Lest however I may be fallible, lest this doctrine may be fallible, which I cannot easily credit, I shall strengthen my own opinions by the opinions of

infinitely better judges than myself, till it be confessed, whatever I may want of ability, I want nothing of candour, or rectitude.

In point of reputation, as men and members of society, actors in their general estimation have declined, from SHAKESPEAR onwards to the present hour. See how this has happened. Our immortal bard, who was another ÆSCHYLUS, was, like ÆSCHYLUS, an actor. JONSON was an actor. The best authors of that time were actors; and, therefore, in emulation of the Greeks, were the theatres placed under the management of actors. What was the consequence? Actors accumulated fortunes, were classed and estimated respectably; and, when the troubles of CHARLES the First closed the theatre, its members were considered as loyal and honourable men, fit to be trusted with commissions to fight in the king's cause, till through the interest of CROMWELL and the puritans, they yielded to the general pressure of the times.

From that moment the theatre got into extraneous hands, and thence may be dated the first step toward the degradation of actors. The names of D'AVENANT, and KILLEGREW, gave cold expectation of any professional encouragement to actors



in their own right. It is true that they were un'er the immediate protection of the Lord Chamberlain, and could not be otherwise than safely guarded by their privilege of appeal to that Nobleman, but this subjected them to adverse interests, which were sure to have adverse consequences.

The progress of this however we have seen. We have seen even in D'AVENANT's time that the two companies dwindled into the size of one, and then were glad enough to unite to keep acting upon its legs. We have seen the theatre, after it was split and divided into factions, under RICH, torne, and distracted, till at length the actors, with BETTERTON at their head, removed, with the permission of King WILLIAM, to Lincoln's Inn Fields, where, inconvenienced as they were, they had success and were respected. We have seen in what manner, from the various ill conduct of RICH, that he was interdicted by the Lord Chamberlain, with both the patents in his pocket which were granted to D'AVENANT and KILLEGREW. We have seen the various changes which fixed CIBBER in the management, at which time acting began to grow into fame and reputation. We have seen, immediately after his secession, how low it sunk under the management of persons who were not actors. We

have seen the miseries of the stage in the time of FLEETWOOD, and we have seen it rescued from those miseries by GARRICK. GARRICK is now lost to us, and what we see now, and may hereafter see, I rejoice it does not come within my province to notice.

The inference from these observations naturally is; that, as the theatre has invariably been a source of meritorious emolument to every description of actors, as the profession of an actor has been considered as perfectly reputable, as the fair privileges of that profession have been accorded and enjoyed as a right which could not be trenched upon, when the property has been confided to actors; and, as the theatre has been, without a single deviation, plunged into difficulties, as the talents by means of which alone a theatre can exist, for authors are nothing without actors, have been misunderstood, misapplied, slighted and set at nought; as salaries have been curtailed, mulcts imposed, task-masters employed, and other unjust and unfair means resorted to, to distress actors, when the property has fallen into the hands of mere adventurers or men of fortune; so it is evidently proved by circumstances that cannot be controverted, and conclusions that cannot be mistaken, that the theatre can never



flourish to any degree of perfection unless confided to the management of actors, and regulated by that paramount authority, which I have contended throughout this work has ever been, and ever ought to be, vested in the Lord Chamberlain.

Other circumstances corroborate this beyond all possibility of contradiction. Persons of talents, education, family, have become actors without degradation. Can this be so when they are to be considered as persons merely employed, mercenaries, hirelings? Men with these recommendations would revolt at such an idea. It will therefore be seen that, at the time of SHAKESPEAR, of BETTERTON, of CIBBER, and of GARRICK, a union of abilities upon an enlarged scale gave a consequence and a respect to the theatre and to acting, and that at every other period it was chilled and discouraged and hid its diminished head.

I come now to consider when acting was in its greatest prosperity, and I think it will not be difficult to prove that moment to have been at the time of GARRICK; and, upon the whole, after his return from Italy. His great example had been long operating on the minds of others, and, when practice had grown into maturity, every point of excel-

lence appears to have been attained. We are told that BETTERTON was taught by TAYLOR, BOOTH by BETTERTON, and QUIN by BOOTH. GARRICK, however, seems only to have been taught by nature; and, in spite of all we can gather of the extraordinary merits of SHAKESPEAR'S cotemporary actors, of those afterwards under BETTERTON, and onward to the end of CIBBER'S management, there does not appear a demonstrative reason to suppose that acting reached its consummation till the appearance of GARRICK.

That GARRICK reached perfection, as far as it is in the power of a human being to be perfect, nothing can controvert. Nature had given him a most intelligent and comprehensive mind; he knew the passions and all their distinctions, shades and gradations, to infinity. He knew all his author expressed, all he meant, and was frequently equal to a penetration capable of refining upon the sentiment he had to utter; so that, let the thought be ever so beautiful, ever so greatly conceived, or admirably written, it came mended from his utterance of it.

To assist this strong, just, and profound judgement, his person and face were capable of setting off



every character, and every mode of expression to advantage; and so great was his command over his form and his features, that the extremes of personification, from kingly dignity to driveling idiotism, were at his command; but it is enough to say, for his fame needs no eulogium, or if it did is it in the power of words to give it, that from the moment he was dressed for a part to the time he laid it down, be it what it might, he was no longer GARRICK, but the character he assumed: but one part of his acting, which can be easily explained, and which it is not only the duty, but within the capacity, of every member of the theatre to acquire, was his correct attention to the business of the scene when others were speaking to him.

The meanest performer on the stage in this can copy GARRICK. The rules which he laid down for himself were, not to suppose a single auditor present; and, not only to fancy he was the character he personated, but actually to infuse into his mind an idea that every thing he saw, heard, and felt, was real. He leered at no ladies in the boxes; contemplated no pleasure in any appointment to be kept after the play; anticipated no hired panegyric in the papers of the next morning; the admiration he received was a tribute from the sensibility of the

audience; he realized the fiction; till, at length, all idea of a theatre vanished, and his hearers were willingly deluded into a belief that they were witnessing scenes in real life; for, critically attentive to these particulars himself, which make half the value of the representation, the other performers caught the fervor, which, diffusing itself to all around, through the medium of a play, the stage exhibited a faithful representation of nature.

To enumerate the wonderful and extensive variety in GARRICK, throughout the whole round of different characters he assumed, which for number, style, or kind, are beyond credibility, would require volumes. The task however, though the fact is astonishing, would not be difficult. Those who have seen him must remember what they felt, and sensations that are imprinted on the mind are easily explained. Instead, therefore, of saying what he was as an actor, I shall content myself with describing what he was not. In his utterance he was not monotonous, tedious, precise, cold, unimpassioned; nor did he rant, bellow, flounder, hoop, or sputter. In his deportment he was not affected, formal, lounging, languid, or awkward; nor did he stride, stalk, jump, kick, or shuffle. He neither buffeted the air with his arms, nor shook his head



like a panteen; whiffled and fluttered like a butterfly, or rolled about like a porpus.

His conduct was not disrespectful to the audience, nor disreputable to himself; he excited attention, but he did not exact it; though his judgement was consummate, he always submitted it with deference; he never appeared solicitous to investigate a sentence, but went at once to the sentiment it enforced; his business was not to methodize words, but to express passions; he never was pertinacious, pedantic, or critical; he neither whined nor declaimed; he acted. In a word, what he uttered seemed to be without study; it seemed to be extemporaneous words arising from the situation conceived at the time, upon the spot. Thus his acting could be no other than nature, and thus he excited no cavil upon the meaning of epithets, no creation of opinions, no dereliction of understanding; his power was unequivocally over the heart. In proof of this, in the course of all that unexampled variety of characters which he personated, combining all the situations into which the human passions can possibly be thrown, he never for a single moment inflated tragedy into bombast, nor degraded comedy into buffoonery.

This negative statement shews the requisites which GARRICK possessed in himself, and which he taught to his pupils; and I the more readily try him by this ordeal, because it gives me opportunity to shew that, by avoiding those impediments to good acting, which if persisted in are completely fatal, every member of a theatre, to that degree of ability which nature and education has given him, may be a good actor. It is on this account I therefore naturally wish that it might again be the desire of actors to emulate, and the determination of the public to tolerate, this only plan by which in the most distant degree acting can ever be a representation of nature, and reconcileable to truth.

I could with pleasure go into every particular excellence in GARRICK's acting, but that my limits are so confined as to render it impracticable. Indeed it could not be done without establishing a broad system equal to a treatise; I must leave it therefore to some more able, though not more willing pen. In the mean time, I owe myself the duty to say, and I beg it may be so understood, that I have not meant to describe, in my observations on this extraordinary man, an actor completely without faults. I only insist that his faults were spots in the sun;



faults which the most perfect mortal must naturally possess; faults to which BETTERTON, as well as GARRICK, must inevitably have been liable; and, having established his perfections, which, in comparison with his faults, were "offa to a wart." I think it will be acknowledged, let BETTERTON's exclusive merit have been what it might, that, as the large field which GARRICK traversed demanded more extensive and more versatile powers, and as taking it in a general point of view he was equally excellent every where; it cannot be but his merits must have stood higher than those of his great predecessor.

Next to GARRICK it will be proper to mention BARRY, an actor of most extraordinary merit; which was confined, however, to tragedy, and serious parts in comedies. In some few respects it is questionable whether he did not excel every actor on the stage. These were in scenes and situations full of tender woe and domestic softness, to which his voice, which was melodious to wonder, lent astonishing assistance. In scenes of an opposite description, he threw a majesty and a grandeur into his acting which gave it a most noble degree of elevation. These peculiar qualities which he possessed in a very striking degree, were greatly manifest in

the tender conflicts of the heart wounded Othello, and the haughty ravings of the high minded Bajazet ; and they were exquisitely blended in the fond, yet kingly Alexander ; but certainly beyond these requisites, BARRY's acting did not extend in any eminent degree.

The turbulent, afflicting, and terrible passions were not at the command of BARRY, which those will witness for me who have heard GARRICK utter the curse in Lear, and who have watched him through the various vicissitudes which mark the guilty ambition of Macbeth. BARRY was wonderfully winning, but he was not superlatively great. He missed of the first grand requisite in tragedy, he excited pity, and delight, but not terror. GARRICK possessed every quality in the same eminent degree. I have noticed already that excessive sensibility conquers too frequently the powers of an actor, and thus BARRY felt himself what GARRICK transferred to the audience. In BARRY they were interested for the actor, in GARRICK for the character.

It cannot be denied however that BARRY was a noble acquisition to the theatre. All exquisitely tender and touching writing came mended from his mouth. There was a pathos, a sweetness, a



delicacy in his utterance, which stole upon the mind and forced conviction upon the memory; every sentiment of honour and virtue recommended to the ear by the language of the author, were rivetted to the heart by the utterance of BARRY.

HOLLAND and POWELL were great acquisitions to the theatre. Their merits however were as different as possible. HOLLAND acquired fame by perseverance and industry, which therefore grew gradually towards perfection. POWELL burst on the stage with every perfection but experience. They had been always intimate friends and their theatrical emulation was creditable to both? \*POWELL's acting was strong nature, as luxuriant as a wilderness.

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\* It is an extraordinary thing that when POWELL died HOLLAND felt a presentiment that he should soon follow him. The last time he ever performed he was in unusual spirits. During the evening he related in the Green-room a number of anecdotes and it is remarkable that they always contained some allusion to POWELL. He repeated the lines which COLMAN had written and which he had repeated at POWELL's death. Every thing in short was POWELL. At last he uttered those extraordinary words. "The first time I ever saw POWELL was at a spouting club where he and I performed Posthumous and Jachimo. The first characters we performed on the stage together were Posthumous and Jachimo. The last time we played together, and, added he, with a sigh it was the last time he ever played, the characters were Posthumous and Jachimo." What makes this matter singular almost beyond belief, he was then dressed for Jachimo, and he died a few days after.

It had a thousand beauties, and a thousand faults. He felt so forcibly that, in any impassioned scene, tears came faster than words, and frequently choaked his utterance. If GARRICK had not gone to Italy but had stayed at home and honestly taught him, there is certainly no height of perfection in tragedy to which such abilities could not have reached; but he hurried over so many characters in the short time he was on the stage, that it was impossible, even had his understanding been as great as his conception, for him to have digested any of them into any thing like form.

HOLLAND was extremely different from POWELL, both as an actor and a man. Though his natural talents were not so strong yet he kept as respectable a situation, and, through the propriety of his conduct, his company was coveted by the wise and the celebrated, while POWELL's weakness led him into the society of the vain and the frivolous. HOLLAND had not, nor had POWELL, received a very liberal education, but his intellects were of that strong, clear, and decided kind, they performed for him the task of a tutor so well, that his decisions upon all occasions were founded in sound judgment and critical experience. He was free, good natured, cheerful, and generous, nor had he an unkind wish



to any human creature; he indulged himself as much as any young man reasonably ought to do; yet, with his purse and his heart ever open, though not sprung from an opulent origin, which circumstance he had too much sense to conceal, at the age, I believe, of thirty three he left his family six thousand pounds,

As to the acting of HOLLAND; what he wanted of POWELL's natural requisities he made up in strong discrimination. One was susceptible, the other critical. Whoever remembers their performing *Posthumous* and *Jachimo* will feel the truth of this observation. POWELL made the strongest first impression, HOLLAND pleased you best upon repetition; POWELL, though he often charmed, sometimes disgusted. HOLLAND, even when you could not admire him, gave you no pain. In short POWELL owed to nature what HOLLAND owed to himself; and, if after all we are obliged to admit something of preminence on the side of POWELL, and regret his loss as an actor, we cannot refrain from heaving a deeper sigh when we reflect that in HOLLAND we lost a most valuable member of society.\*

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\* Before I quit this subject, I shall relate an anecdote relative to the funeral of Poor HOLLAND. He was one of FOOTE's greatest favourites,

ROSS and SMITH were not immediately GARRICK's disciples, which was a misfortune to ROSS; but SMITH's industry being always alive to his duty, he sought every possible opportunity of improving by a correct study of the merit and manner of GARRICK. Thus have fools called HOLLAND and SMITH the copyers of GARRICK. The fair, liberal principle upon which they copied him was emulation, not manner. What painter or poet ought to blush for having studied CORREGIO or DRYDEN, till he was capable of infusing the grace of the first and the energy of the latter into his picture or poem! SMITH, greatly to his credit, studied GARRICK

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perhaps in some measure because the world said he was the retailer of his wit; but there was no occasion, HOLLAND had wit enough of his own—besides, ARISTOPHANES dealt in the retail way himself. GEORGE GARRICK, being one of HOLLAND's executors, with his usual good nature (for no man possessed more) undertook to manage the funeral in a way suitable to his friend's circumstances, for which purpose he went to Chiswick, and ordered a decent vault, and such other preparations as he thought necessary. HOLLAND's father was a baker. FOOTE was invited to the funeral, which he certainly attended with unfeigned sorrow; for, exclusive of his real concern for the loss of a convivial companion, whenever he had a serious moment, he felt with very strong susceptibility. While the ceremony was performing, G. GARRICK remarked to FOOTE how happy he was, out of respect to his friend, to see every thing so decently conducted. "You see," said he, "what a snug family vault we have made here." "*Family vault*," said FOOTE, with the tears trickling down his cheeks, "Damme, if I did not think it had been the *family oven*."



under this liberal idea; and the public in consequence, in their commendation of perfectness, industry, attention, and gentlemanly demeanor, strongly applauded those particular merits in this actor, which he possessed, and passed by trifling impediments, which could not be called faults, with the candour due to warm devotion and active exertion.

Ross was an object of much greater severity. His indolence and supineness were intolerable, and unpardonable, for he certainly possessed very strong requisites as an actor; but CHURCHILL, throughout the *Rosciad*, did not write better truth, or stronger satire, than the two lines applied to this performer; yet, who shall deny that Ross was sometimes, and to his disgrace, at will, captivating, and fairly able to stand up to BARRY? Whoever has by chance seen him in his best moods perform *Effex*, or *Alexander*, will agree with me. In short, he was a voluptuous man, and particularly a great eater, therefore he had not the perseverance to give the necessary attention to his profession, and thus he happened to be admirable, or insufferable, in proportion as he was more or less plethoric.

In comedy, as in tragedy, GARRICK led the train;

may, take it all in all, it is difficult to say whether Thalia and Melpomene possessed him or he either of them with greater ardour, for his devotion to each was equally sincere, and they were to him equally propitious. No wonder then, with such a stimulus, the actors of his day were emulous to attain the same perfection according to the force of their respective abilities, which were so various and extensive that it is difficult to say who merits the first notice. I shall therefore take them according to seniority.

WOODWARD, though indifferently gifted by nature, except as to his person, which was so complete that he could not throw himself into an inelegant attitude, possessed such sound principles of acting, that he is for ever to be regretted. There are characters in real life which appear out of nature. These are fair game for authors; and, when they are well drawn, did we not meet with performers of the admirable description of WOODWARD, we should lose the pleasure of seeing such characters well acted. These characters are not general, but particular nature, and therefore it requires strong art and judgment to delineate them. The great point is to steer between extravagance and vapidity, a knowledge of effect completely understood by WOODWARD.



Thus, in all the coxcombs, WOODWARD must greatly have excelled CIBBER, who designed and originally performed them; for WOODWARD even in voice, which was the worst deduction from his merit by what I could ever understand, had the advantage, and when we consider that, superadded to the experience he had gained by seeing them performed in their original manner, he had the opportunity of improving on them by his own observation, assisted by the elegance and gracefulness of his deportment, there can be no doubt that these particular characters have never been performed to perfection but by him.

When we go into a species of parts still more extravagant, such as the braggart through all its gradations, nothing could have been superior to WOODWARD. BOBADIL, PAROLLES, BESSUS, and others of a similar kind never had certainly upon the whole any such representative. I have already drawn a slight comparison between WOODWARD and the French actor DUGAZON. The superiority however is greatly on the side of WOODWARD. The French stage knows nothing of that broad humour, strong character, and striking situation, which characterize ours. They have their *coups de theatre*, but the general effect is full of frivolity and seldom

gets beyond sprightliness. Their *bienfiance* is but another word for vapidty, and then if DUGAZON had possessed the requisites of WOODWARD, which he certainly did not in any eminent degree, the extravagance of D'ANCOURT, well drawn, as it was, could not have afforded the same opportunity for a display of his talents as WOODWARD found in SHAKESPEAR and JONSON.

YATES was one of those meritorious actors who added to chaste nature becoming respectability. He had his hardneffes, and those, who, like CHURCHILL, cavil in parcels, and are too acrimonious to be candid, may on this account, condemn him in the lump; but I should not despair of proving that YATES had as good an understanding as CHURCHILL, and that, as an actor, he accomplished his public duty upon honefter and more respectable grounds than the other as an author.

I know of no French actor so good as YATES; though, had he been a Frenchman, the Lisimons, Gerontes, and every species of fathers and guardians characterized by humour and caprice would have been exactly in his way. He had the best parts of BONNEVAL, DESSESARTS, and BELLECOUR. On the English stage he resembled UNDERHILL; but with



considerable advantage. No actor was ever more chaste, more uniform, more characteristic; and, though perhaps sometimes he overshot those particular spots which nature designed him to hit, yet upon the whole his acting in an eminent degree was gratifying to the public and exemplary to stage.

SHUTER, whose strong nature and irresistible humour were highly and peculiarly captivating, must be ranked as a theatrical wonder. Neither on the French, nor on the English stage, do we find any one to whom we can compare him. His strong conception, his laughable manner, his perpetual diversity were his own, and were displayed in a thousand various forms, always extraordinary, and yet always in nature. The extremes of life were never so critically displayed as by SHUTER. His performance of the Miser and Master Stephen are incontrovertible proofs of this remark. Has any one seen him in *Corbaccio*, and will he tell me that acting ever went beyond it?

When he went out of his way, so the question was humour, could any thing be superior to SHUTER? I look upon him, as far as it went, to have been one of the best burletta fingers in the

world. Nothing upon earth could have been superior to his Midas. His great fault was indolence; but eccentric qualities will naturally be accompanied by eccentric conduct. Thus we perceive in his acting great inequalities, but those parts of it that were sterling were invaluable; and, in proof of it, see all those vain attempts at an imitation of him from EDWIN onwards that have degraded acting into buffoonery, of which SHUTER had none, through which even actors of good sense have expected to grow into reputation, till mistaking the way, they have made a sort of JOSEPH's coat of their acting; and, in proportion as they have pursued manner, have lost sight of nature.

WESTON was another of nature's wonders. He seemed as if he had possessed neither idea, nor conception, yet was he endowed with so many chaste and felicitous gifts, that he uttered rather than acted; but it was such utterance that the most accomplished acting never excelled. The French know nothing of actors such as SHUTER and WESTON. Their *naïveté* bears an implication that deserts simplicity and almost goes to cunning. The ideas of the French in any one part of their conduct, either on or off the stage, are never inartificial. They inhale caution, wariness, and distrust,



with their earliest breath, and the first use they make of their tongues is to reason, and this obtains among the very lowest descriptions of that nation; therefore, if authors fairly depict their manners, though they may find, and this will be rarely the case, *naïveté*, they never will find what an ingenuous English mind understands by the word simplicity.

NOKES, and NORRIS, as I have noticed already, possessed similar gifts to WESTON; whether in an equal degree it will be impossible for us to ascertain; in a superior degree it will be impossible for us to allow; but many of my readers have seen him in Scrub, Dr. Last, and other characters, and I have nothing to do but appeal to their evidence to make out my assertion.

FOOTE ranked respectably as an actor, a circumstance that has not been always granted; for, as peoples principles are supposed to be vitiated by keeping bad company, so those, who have been professedly mimics, have been rarely allowed to have been good actors, which is more an admitted than a real fact. GARRICK was an incomparable mimic. Take the circumstance as it really is and the truth will be this. Mimickry is the easiest thing in the world,

acting the most difficult ; for, if this were not admitted, those who imitate cats, dogs, and birds, as well as all the race of ventriloquists and mummers of every description, would naturally be good actors. On the contrary, acting must have conception, soul, sensibility, and all those mental qualities, which mimicry has nothing to do with.

FOOTE was by no means a good mimic. He knew singularity to be very catching, and a strong recommendation with the superficial who admire more that which is merely plausible, than that which is really substantial ; and therefore he put on something of this kind in order to heighten his acting : which, added to dress, an extravagant manner, and other artful resources, was supposed to convey a likeness of the person represented, who had never been seen by one of his auditors, perhaps, out of five hundred. There were characters, however, where mimicry was totally unnecessary, that FOOTE performed admirably, and many of those he wrote himself, which were not merely calculated to ridicule individuals, have not since him found adequate representatives.

O'BRIEN, who was snatched from the Theatre when he had arrived, though young, to great repu-



tation, would certainly have proved an actor of the first consequence. The ease, elegance, and grace in his deportment were peculiar, and his own; and spight of his voice, which for light characters was not by any means an impediment, in the representation of a great variety of parts his acting was critically natural, his manner interestingly impressive, and his deportment uncommonly attractive.

KING, whom I formerly compared to PREVILLE, had, and I am happy, in common with every admirer of good acting, to add, has, much more extensive merit than had that deservedly celebrated performer. When we speak of French actors, let their intrinsic merit have been what it might, we can only give them credit for that which they have manifested. PREVILLE performed all the Valets, and similar characters to such a degree of perfection, that a revival of MOLIERE, and all celebrated authors was demanded to give opportunity for the display of his talents. It is impossible to deny that he possessed, in the words of his biographer, intelligence, variety, deportment, gaiety, grace, and nature; but, with all these admirable requisites, he could not perform more than what was given him; fortunately enough perhaps, for, as on the French Stage it is a proverb that Harlequin is always Har-

lequin, and Crispin always Crispin, so PREVILLe was always PREVILLe, and indeed, so are French actors always French actors ; and the question is not so much how they would manage if they were trusted with contrast, variety, and diversity, as how they are capable of contrasting, varying, and diversifying the eternal sameness of sentiment and situation which pervade the most perfect pieces on the French Stage.

LE KAIN has been compared to GARRICK, so his PREVILLe ; but the historian, in fair justice, is obliged to confess, of the first, that, however, the French actor had taste, and knew how to support effect, the English actor had the superiority on the side of nature ; and, as to the other, that GARRICK performed with equal celebrity, tragedy, and comedy, which it is impossible to reconcile on the French Stage. A confession that sufficiently explains the confined ideas of acting on their theatre.

If PREVILLe, therefore, was to cope with KING, it could be only as to the Valets, for in no other way have they performed parts at all similar ; and when it is given, which it easily will be, that the French Stage knows no characters of that description which require those powers of acting that are neces-



fary in the performance of Trapanti, Brafs,\* Tom, and various other parts on the English stage, the having stronger situation to manage, better humour to exprefs, and fonder effect to convey, calls for greater talents, and we are obliged to allow the superiority to incline according as we are biaffed by the evidence of our fenfes.

When we go further, and point to fuch characters as Touchftone, Malvolio, all the bucks, fuch as Squire Groom and Sir Harry Beagle, to which I could add a prodigious number of others in various ways, but fhall however content myfelf with mentioning Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Anthony Absolute, and Lord Ogleby, which may now be witneffed in as great perfection as ever, and to which every actor of the prefent day ought to bow out of devotion as to a precious relick, it would be folly any longer to talk of a comparifon between KING and PREVILE. Good English acting is like English punch of which the French know nothing but the lemonade.

It is as difficult to liken KING to any English

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\* I am aware that Brafs is French, but D'ANCOURT's Frontin and VANBURGH's Brafs, are greatly different in point of value.

actor. Those who performed characters in his style at the time of CIBBER seem to have been followed by YATES, who, though he was, as I have with pleasure observed, an admirable actor, had a manner perfectly distinct. KING is a performer who has thrown novelty into old characters, consequence into new, and nature into all. Indeed his leading feature is integrity; which quality having been invariably his guide during his whole public and private conduct, he has most respectably endeared himself to the world in general by a display of truth, and nature from the stage, and to a large circle of admiring friends by an exercise of benevolence, good humour, and every other social virtue.

I lament that I cannot dwell more particularly on the merit of actors. ARTHUR was an actor of considerable merit, HAVARD and BERRY demand a tribute of respect, SPARKS, DYER, COLLINS, MARTIN, and even BURTON, BRANSBY, VAUGHAN and many others claim a right to be spoken of as reputable members of the theatre.

AICKIN has performed at all times with judgment, feeling and nature. His information being extensive, his knowledge profound, and his dis-



crimination critical, he has often delighted, and never offended; and, though he has not reached the summit of his profession, he has maintained the height at which he arrived, by no means a mediocre station, firm and unshaken; his guide understanding, and his support good sense. The two PALMERS were actors of great merit; the only drawback on both was manner which in the first was too refined, and in the other too vulgar. PARSONS, and DODD, must be spoken of with warmth. Both these actors were favourites with GARRICK. The discrimination of PARSONS, in parents and guardians, was his own, and he went over this walk in a manner perfectly original, which was the more admirable coming as he did after YATES; besides he had treasured up a great fund of knowledge, and was capable of speaking with taste and judgment to every question concerning the arts, a congenial feeling with those enlarged ideas which particularly belong to acting. DODD's great merit was altogether singularity; which, guided by a perfect knowledge of his profession, rendered his exertions very respectable.

There are also other actors who largely contributed to the reputation of the stage, BLAKES, BADDELEY, and even HOLTAM, supported the characters

of Frenchmen with great reputation. Nor was their merit confined merely to that cast of parts. MOODY's genteel, and BARRINGTON's blackguard, Irishmen, were excellent, and much might be said to shew that there was at that time scarcely a wheel in the theatrical machine that was not of material use in contributing towards the regular, correct, and constant rotation of the whole system.

I cannot with any propriety finish this chapter without noticing that REDDISH, WROUGHTON, HENDERSON, WILSON, LEE LEWIS, and many others were performers of considerable merit, and it would give me real satisfaction to go particularly into an account of their various talents; but, as they do not properly come under my promise, and as the earliest parts of an actors exertions are not so favourable to report as those when his reputation becomes more confirmed, in which situation all those whom I have mentioned above stand, it will be better for them, and more becoming in me, to let the judgment on their merits rest with the public, by whom many of them are now remembered with pleasure.



## CHAP. XI.

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ACTRESSES.

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**H**AVING spoken of actresses in tragedy who sustained the first situations before GARRICK went to Italy, I shall now dwell a little upon those who strove to fill their vacant places after his return.

Mrs. YATES was a performer of extraordinary merit. If she had a fault it was an emulation of the best French actresses; which gave a declamatory air to her delivery, but in her it was less a fault than it could have been in any other actress, because her voice was so wonderfully well calculated for this part of acting, that what would have appeared monotonous in any other was in her penetrating to admiration. In all the complaints of suffering innocence, she was pathetically affecting; her melancholy and despondency excited generous pity,

and her grief was repaid with the tear of commiseration.

This however was not the boundary to her acting. In scenes of animated passion and haughty fierceness, her manner was commanding and her expression majestic. She had all the grand and noble requisities of tragedy in great perfection. If she personated pride, she maintained it even in disappointment. If greatness, she never lost sight of its dignity however fallen. Her merits were in the nature of those of BARRY. Her queens were full of elevation, and her lovers of strong sensibility, but here we must stop. Grandeur and tenderness comprized the whole of her talents; the intermediate passions had nothing to do with them; they entirely consisted of the power to awe her auditors into admiration, or melt them into tears.

Mrs. BARRY had more of GARRICK's merit in tragedy and was equal to quickness, passion, rage and an exposition of all the terrible and turbulent passions. Common grief was too tame for her expression. She knew not how to insinuate herself into the heart, her mode was to seize it. Admiration was not enough; she must beget astonishment. This difficult effect it must be confessed her acting



very often produced; but it seldom happens that such bold and forcible strokes of art are free from inequality. It required GARRICK's perfectness in a conception of all the passions to be excellent in these; besides turbulent men may be admitted, but turbulent women are unlovely and lose something of feminine delicacy.

Mrs. PRITCHARD was perhaps the only actress who had art enough to reconcile these jarring interests. She was every where great, every where impressive, and every where feminine. Mrs. BARRY was sometimes below and sometimes above the standard; sometimes, I had almost said, vulgar, and sometimes, I may truly say, wonderful. To speak truth there could not be two actresses who were so well calculated to set off the perfections of each other as Mrs. YATES, and Mrs. BARRY. The hiatus created by Mrs. YATES the powers of Mrs. BARRY were exactly suited to fill, and perhaps, though I will not allow one to be completely equal, taken separately, to Mrs. PRITCHARD in Jane Shore, or the other to Mrs. CIBBER in Alicia, yet their acting so exactly sorted together, and there was by means of contract so peculiar a felicity in its operation, that it is difficult to believe the public ever saw better collective effect than in

those characters which were so often performed by Mrs. YATES and Mrs. BARRY.

These two actresses engrossed the principal reputation in their time ; Mrs. WARD, Miss MACKLIN, Mrs. HAMILTON, Miss BRIDE, Mrs. FITZHENRY and others, had done the state some service ; but, either at that time had disappeared or were disappearing. Mrs. WARD had many excellent requisites but she was unequal, almost as unequal as ROSS. She performed, however, at times to admiration, and would have succeeded better had she not been at Covent Garden, where the play was generally neglected for the pantomime, and would have been performed to empty benches for the first half of it, had not RICH established a rule to admit no auditor during any part of the evening at less than full price.

Miss MACKLIN performed at times respectably, but she was a parrot, and uttered what had been taught her by her father, as a task got by heart, which she seemed to have neither taste nor inclination for. Mrs. HAMILTON, the stock Covent-Garden Queen, had a bustling something in her manner that might have been endured, if the public had not been accustomed to Mrs. PRITCHARD. As to Miss BRIDE, she retired so hastily from the



Stage, that there was no forming any judgment of what she would have been, had she remained ; and for Mrs. FITZHENRY, she crossed the Shannon to exhibit a new species of acting, which, captivating as it might be in Ireland, was not relished here. The reader will excuse me from mentioning inferior actresses to these in tragedy, who, however, let their natural requisites have been what they might, always succeeded best in proportion as they studied in the school of GARRICK.

I must not, however, forget to notice Miss YOUNGE, afterwards Mrs. POPE. GARRICK had always what he used to call a *bisque* in his sleeve, which was a stroke of policy useful both to him and to the theatre. It was no other, than to fix upon an object of merit, in order to curb other performers, when he either knew or fancied their conduct was likely to grow overbearing, or in any other way troublesome. REDDISH was produced in this manner to awe POWELL, and Miss YOUNGE was produced to lessen the consequence of Mrs. BARRY.

With this lady GARRICK took most uncommon pains. It was not, however, till after a variety of experiments that she gained that hold of the public, which she long and deservedly kept. It is needless

to say what were her particular merits, they are too recently in the recollection of the public, to be easily forgot. They had to the last a spice of her preceptor, and even her manner of filling the stage, gave a strong idea of stage conduct in use five and thirty years ago.

As to actresses in comedy, Mrs. CLIVE maintained an undiminished reputation till she took leave of the public, which was in 1768. She had then lived to see her pupils, Mrs. GREEN, and Miss POPE, in possession of high public favour; both of whom, however, were by no means mannerists. Nature had largely furnished them with mental wealth; the experience of Mrs. CLIVE had only shewn them how to lay it out to advantage. Thus, though they were both admirable in Chambermaids and Hoydens, and indeed almost every other comic part, they were neither like each other, nor like their principal, though perfectly and always in nature.

Mrs. GREEN had humour, even to drollery. She had something of SHUTER, and something of her father. These were not exactly the talents of Miss POPE; who, however, though perfectly unaffected herself, exceeded Mrs. GREEN in assuming finesse and affectation. Perhaps, Mrs. CLIVE never aped



mock gentility better. I cannot conceive how the Aunt and the Niece in the *Clandestine Marriage* can ever again be personated to the same degree of perfection; but to dwell upon comparative excellence is next to cavilling. Some of my readers remember Mrs. CLIVE, many Mrs. GREEN, and all Miss POPE. To the first of these classes my remarks will be recognised for truth, as they relate to those three performers; to the second, as they regard the two last; and the third, in the characters Miss POPE has now the good sense to perform, will have a just and a faithful idea of the manner in which parts of that description were acted before boldness and vulgarity usurped the place of truth and nature.

With Mrs. ABINGTON came a species of excellence which the Stage seems never before to have boasted in the same perfection. The higher parts in comedy had been performed chastly and truly, perhaps in these particulars more so than by this actresses. There was a peculiar goodness gleamed across the levity of Mrs. PRITCHARD, and by what we can learn of Mrs. BRACEGIRDLE, who seems to have possessed the same captivating sort of manner which distinguished Mrs. ABINGTON, she was in these characters natural and winning; but it remained for her successor to add a degree of grace,

fashion, and accomplishment to sprightliness, which was no sooner seen, than it was imitated in the politest circles.

Mrs. BRACEGIRDLE, let her merit have been what it might, did not perform CIBBER's coquettes ; and though that author waited for Mrs. OLDFIELD before he accomplished Lady Betty Modish, yet, however admirable she might have been in the representation of those characters, they did not appear to be so exactly in her way, as Lady Townly and other parts which had a higher degree of consequence attached to them. Mrs. ABINGTON kept critically to coquettes, and there can be no doubt, take the round of them through, and it is pretty extensive, that more uniform good acting never was manifested.

I have already spoken comparatively of Mrs. ABINGTON, and Madame BELLCOUR ; but with no view to associate them in elegance and grace, which the characters Madame BELLCOUR personated would not in the same degree admit of. The French actresses personated French coquettes to admiration, but I have already observed, speaking of KING and PREVILLE, that every thing among the French is underwritten. They know nothing of Beatrice,



Lady Betty Modish or Millamant. The likeness is in those higher kind of chambermaids who aped their mistresses, and thus exactly, as we have been accustomed to say KING and ABINGTON, instead of Tom and Phillis, so it was impossible to speak of PREVILLE without assimilating the idea of BELLCOUR.

In addition to the grace, the ease, and the elegance, with which Mrs. ABINGTON personated characters in high life, and aped politeness in chambermaids, her taste for dress was novel and interesting. She was consulted by ladies of the first distinction, not from caprice as we have frequently seen in other instances, but from a decided conviction of her judgment in blending what was beautiful with what was becoming. Indeed dress took a sort of ton from her fancy, and ladies, both on the stage and off, piqued themselves on decorating their persons with decency and decorum, and captivating beholders by a modest concealment of those charms, which, in imitation of the French women, who never knew the sensation of a blush, the result of English feminine rectitude, our females now, to the disgrace of the age, make it their study to expose.

Miss ELLIOT was a charming actress. Maria in the *Citizen* certainly never was properly represented but by her. Indeed the different characters which she performed with WOODWARD after his return from Ireland were admirably sustained, and a few years would certainly have marked her as a very accomplished actress, had not her early death deprived the stage of a most valuable ornament.

I might with great propriety speak of other actresses and it would give me pleasure to dwell on their various merits; but to mention those who were, at the time I am confined to, mere novices, would be to place them in a disadvantageous point of view, and to notice others, who, though respectable, possessed only secondary situations, it would be difficult to know where to stop. I shall therefore content myself with having given this slight, and I must confess, inadequate description, of those few whose abilities were the most prominent during the time GARRICK had the management of the theatre.



## CHAP. XII.

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SINGERS.

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THOUGH I should conceive that I have said every thing on the subject of music itself and its composers, that can be requisite, or indeed that ought to occupy a place in this work, it still remains for me to speak of singers. I shall however confine myself to English singers, many of whom have at different periods possessed admitted reputation equal to the Italians, and real reputation superior to them.

Though we know of ARABELLA HUNT, Mrs. TOFTS, Mrs. ROBINSON, and many other celebrated English female singers, we are not so correct as to men, and the reason is, that nothing in the way of public singing has been considered of consequence enough to record, except what related to the opera.

Masques however had been performed with great celebrity ; and, when the *Beggar's Opera* begat so many musical pieces, the theatre gave such a tone of simplicity to English music, that not only celebrated singers began to be known, but those who had before conceived it indispensibly necessary to be musicians professionally, in order to attain reputation as singers, were astonished to find that a good voice, a correct ear, a little feeling, and an unaffected utterance embraced the whole mystery.

Every actor furnished with these materials became presently a singer. The public began to feel instead of admire, and that admiration which had so disgraced English manliness into effeminacy by lavishing so much money and so much praise on the treble of FARINELLI, turned all at once into applause at the bass of LEVERIDGE. As, however, it will better answer my purpose to bring before the reader's view those singers whom some of them may remember, I shall take the period when BEARD, and Mrs. CIBBER, were so greatly celebrated, and carry the subject as far onward as will elucidate what I think it material to say upon this head.

BEARD was a singer of great excellence. His



voice was found, male, powerful, and extensive. His tones were natural and he had flexibility enough to execute any passages however difficult, which task indeed frequently fell to his lot in some of HANDEL's oratorios; but, with these qualifications, where the feelings were most roused, he was, of course, the most excellent. If he failed at all it was in acquired taste, which I will venture to pronounce was a most fortunate circumstance for him; for I never knew an instance where acquired taste did not destroy natural expression; a quality self-evidently as much preferable to the other as nature is to art.

I have already said that I consider BEARD, taken altogether, as the best English singer. He was one of those you might fairly try by SHAKESPEAR's speech to the actors. He did not mouth it, but his words came trippingly over the tongue; he did not out HEROD HEROD, but he begot a temperance that gave his exertions smoothness; he never outstepped the modesty of nature, nor made the judicious grieve; in short he never did more than was set down for him, he never set on a quantity of barren spectators to applaud while some necessary question of the song stood still; he let his own discretion be his tutor, and held the mirror up to

nature. Well might one apostrophize in imitation of *Hamlet*.

Oh there be fingers that I have listened to, and heard others applaud, aye, and encore too, that neither having the accent of Eunuch, man, or beast, yet a mixture of all three, or possessing a single trait of fancy, taste, or expression, have so soared, so sunk, and so cantabileed, that one would have thought some Ventriloquist had made fingers, and not made them well, they imitated braying so abominably. BEARD was the reverse of all this; besides he was very valuable as an actor. In the *Jovial Crew*, *Love in a Village*, *Comus*, and *Artaxerxes*, he gave proof of this in a degree scarcely inferior to any body.

LOWE was a great favourite and perhaps had a more even and mellow voice than BEARD; and, in mere love songs when little more than a melodious utterance was necessary, he might have been said to have exceeded him, but it was in the nature of those particulars, in a much inferior degree however, that BARRY excelled GARRICK. LOWE lost himself beyond the namby pamby poetry of Vauxhall; BEARD was at home ever where.



Coming forwarder we get to VERNON; a most powerful instance of what good sense does for a singer. He had no voice, without which quality it is difficult to suppose a singer at all, and it is impossible that he could have arrived to any degree of reputation had he not been favoured by nature with strong conception, quick sensibility, and a correct taste. With these and nothing more, he made himself a most respectable favourite, and it was impossible to hear him without saying, "what an admirable singer that man would have been, had his voice been equal to his judgment." VERNON besides this was a good actor.

REINHOLD, who did not succeed so well, will solve this seeming paradox relative to VERNON, and shew clearly how much natural expression must invariably triumph over acquired taste. REINHOLD was a good musician, and not a bad actor, he was really possessed of a voice, not however of the first rate, but, taking the road in which so many singers have been bewildered, leaving the manly part of singing for the less natural qualification of modulating through all the meanders of *falsetto*, he injured his reputation and rendered those gifts of nature contemptible which in VERNON would have commanded respect. It is considered as a very curious thing

that the best singers in all countries, have been, generally speaking, the worst musicians, but nothing can be easier to explain. Voices utter melodies, and melodies are not the science itself, but the principle on which it is formed.

MANZOLI, and LOVATINI, were the best singers on the Italian stage; BEARD, VERNON and BANNISTER on the English.\*

BANNISTER was in many respects superior to any singer that perhaps ever lived. The body and volume of voice which he possessed were only equalled by its sweetness and interest. He had as much taste, as much playfulness, and as extensive power as the most fashionable of those singers who think singing totally consists in flexibility, and that a voice cannot be exercised to perfection unless when it is flying to the bridge of the fiddle, and sliding back again in chromatics; but BANNISTER had too much sense to use this power, except when

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\* MANZOLI and GUARDUCCI were competitors in Italy. The public were to determine which sung best. MANZOLI had the voice of the spectators, GUARDUCCI of the musicians; what was the consequence? MANZOLI made a fortune every where, GUARDUCCI did nothing any where.



he had an inclination to shew how ridiculous it is. Thus in the *Son-in-law* he sung, "Water parted from the sea," with as much taste, as much sweetness, and as much variety as TENDUCCI, at the same time that he introduced a degree of burlesque into it that gave the blush to modern singing. BANNISTER had no necessity to convey any thing of this extraneous kind into his general singing. That was equally creditable to the poet, to the musician, and to himself. Instead of surprizing, he delighted, and the fine manly accents he conveyed charmed the ear, and interested the heart.

Female singers in England have been unquestionably superior, take them all in all, to those of any country in the world, and it is little to say that, at those several moments the public have disgracefully set themselves up to espouse the cause of Italians, as if music wholly depended on them and their caprice, there were English women clearly of greater capacity. Every thing that happened at the time of Mrs. TOFTS, Mrs. HUNT, and Mrs. ROBINSON we'll pass by, though perhaps it might not be difficult to prove that while these were neglected for CUZZONI, and FAUSTINA, and others according to the times when they appeared, it was totally unnecessary to import Italian singing and

Italian impertinence, when singing, in as great perfection, was to be found in English women, and modesty along with it.

I am confirmed in this opinion by a comparative view of the English and Italian female singers in my own recollection. Among the Italian, perhaps after all SESTINI was the best. I can just remember those who came immediately before the *Buonna Figliola*, and it has been my uniform remark that the Italian women have sung better than the men; but their plaintive singers have been the best, and and we have never heard any of their cantabile singers who piqued themselves upon a large compass and the execution of difficult passages, but their tone has been so nasal, that we might have mistaken them for the hautboy or the clarinet that accompanied them. SCOTTI was a sweet singer, ZAMPERINI a graceful singer, indeed this last was a kind of female VERNON, but what were any of them in point of voice, delicacy, and sweetness, compared to Mrs. ARNE, Miss BRENT, or even Mrs. VINCENT; but when we come forward and speak of Mrs. SHERIDAN, and Miss HARROP, the merit of the Italian females sinks to nothing.



I regret that I am constrained to notice the different talents of these fingers in a short and general way, for I should to be glad to make out my position by expatiating largely on them. Mrs. PINTO, possessing an exquisite voice and being under a master, the great characteristics of whose musical abilities were natural ease and unaffected simplicity, was a most valuable finger. Her power was resistless, her neatness was truly interesting and her variety was incessant. Though she owed a great deal to nature, she owed a great deal to ARNE, without whose careful hand her singing might perhaps have been too luxuriant.

Mrs. ARNE was deliciously captivating. She knew nothing in singing or in nature but sweetness and simplicity. She sung exquisitely, as a bird does, her notes conveyed involuntary pleasure and undefinable delight. It should for ever be reiterated that fingers of this description never outrage the poet nor the musician. Indeed I conceive that there is a species of ingratitude in such violation, for without the poet and the musician what would become of the finger?

Mrs. VINCENT, like LOWE, depended almost upon her voice which was very charming. In short

it was that true English voice which has an evenness, a fullness, a solidity, that one might analyze so as to shew that nothing Italian can have. She was deservedly a great favourite, and sung songs of ease and sweetness with great delicacy.

There is a kind of voice, I will not say peculiarly English, but much more beautiful and perfect, and more common in England than any where else. Such a voice had Mrs. KENNEDY, who, had she have been suffered to keep to parts particularly adapted for her, would have augmented that public admiration she so meritoriously excited to astonishment; but, by having the good nature to personate parts totally unfit for her, a left handed policy in a manager, by the bye, who cannot keep up his real interest without keeping up the consequence of the performer, we had perpetually the worst part of her singing. In some light characters this conduct was particularly reprehensible.\* In short Mrs. KEN-

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\* In *Artaxerxes* Mrs. KENNEDY was allotted the part from which the opera takes its title, and in which she was certainly respectable; but the songs were not in her voice, and in every other respect it did not suit her. She ought to have performed Arbaces, which was exactly in her compass, and the different passages in the airs have a peculiar neatness which her voice was remarkably calculated to execute. "Amid a thousand rack-  
"ing woes," which is perhaps the most masterly song in the opera, she



NEDY was one of those singers who put us in mind of the heartiness of our national character, which, after fashion and folly have for a time flattered us out of it, we resume just upon the same principle as we cherish a kind and sincere friend, who, forgetting our wanderings, kindly points out the road to comfort and content.

I could mention many other female singers of very respectable talents, whose names the reader will supply for me. Among these, however, I ought to confine myself to theatrical singers. I cannot help nevertheless reminding the public of the great and extraordinary merit of Miss HARROP, and Mrs. SHERIDAN, both of whom were just seen and then lost.

I own I prefer Mrs. SHERIDAN before Miss HARROP, and indeed before any singer I ever heard, even to this moment; but this is no ill compliment to Miss HARROP, because, charming and exquisite as they were, her talents were confined to concert singing. The talents of Mrs. SHERIDAN, had the

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would have sung with prodigious effect, for it was extraordinary that her voice had as much flexibility as volume.

experiment been made, would been found to have been universal; but the public were not so far to be obliged.

Those who have never heard Mrs. SHERIDAN can be no more able to conceive the force and effect of her merit, than I can be capable of describing it. I can easily make it understood that, if she was possessed of every perfection and free from every fault as a singer, she must have been superior to every other, but this is theory; the practical part of the argument cannot be felt but by those who were fortunate enough to hear her, who, if they have any recollection and will take the trouble to repeat MILTON's passage uttered by Comus immediately after he has heard the Lady sing Sweet Echo, they will find their sensations were at that time delighted equal to that description, for indeed, "she took the prisoned soul and lapped it in "Elysium."

I shall only say farther as to singing, that it cannot be excellent except in proportion as it joins in correspondence, which some writer has explained to mean intelligence of the heart, with the poetry and the music it has to convey. Every thing extraneous, every thing forced, every thing in short,



as SHAKESPEAR expreffes it, overdone, or come tardy of, though it may furprize cannot delight ; and, if it cannot delight, it is from the purpose of finging, and though unskilful auditors may applaud, it cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of one of which, must, in the allowance of every man of sense, outweigh a whole theatre of others.

## CHAP. XIII.

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RECAPITULATION.

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HAVING by every certain, every probable, and even every possible circumstance, which I have considered necessary to select from those materials I supplied myself with for this undertaking, endeavoured to draw the reader's attention to the antiquity of the stage, its operation upon manners both generally and abstractedly, its influence over the mind, its capability of polishing and refining our social nature, and those various ways, in which, in proportion as it is respectably and worthily conducted, it may at all times be considered as an object of national importance, I shall now very briefly recapitulate those leading particulars which may serve unerringly to demonstrate by what means it has at any time, and in any country lost its consequence, by what means that consequence has become irre-



trievable, by what means it has, or could have been retrieved, and by what means alone it can possibly be kept up and established.

The theatre is a school of morality, or it is nothing. Its original establishment in every country has had this broad feature. The exploits of heroes, the maxims of philosophers, and the good of mankind were the foundation to which the fabric, even to the superstructure, however fancifully it might have been ornamented, tended in all directions and as by one consent. A stability of this adamantine kind could not have been confirmed but by the encouragement of workmen of the same description of those who reared the structure. Who were these? Authors and actors.

Every one of the consequences therefore which we are to examine are clearly traceable to this single source, and it only remains to see whether at any time there has been such a dearth of good authors and actors as to weaken the theatre by the absence of valuable exertions, in which case no blame is to be any where imputed; whether good authors and actors have expected terms that were unreasonable, and such as could not possibly be accorded, in which case the blame would be imputable to them;

or whether their labours have been exacted from them upon unworthy and degrading terms, in which case common sense must impute the blame to their employers; and lastly to what authority authors and actors ought to be amenable.

Though neither Greece nor Rome are exactly cases in point as to the illustration of this argument because in both instances the profligacy of the people brought on the moment which terminated the theatre and the country together, yet we have enough to go upon to shew these positions to be critically right. In the earlier periods of Greece before comedy was generally established, in short before Aristophanes, the theatre was in the hands of poets, and actors, and under the inspection of Government, at which time it was as material an object in its place as the areopagus, and held as distinguished a reputation. It was managed by the great triumvirate; but this was not enough. Judges were appointed and every exhibition underwent an ordeal, but when Aristophanes, the most licentious poet that ever lived, became possessed of the stage, it soon hastened to destruction for no reason upon earth but because it was uncontrouled.



In Rome, the theatre could have no character because the actors had an ascendancy over the poets. It was regulated certainly, if the word could be properly be allowed me, by Government; but of what nature were the regulations? a crooked and even wicked policy by which the theatre dictated to the people as a cloak for private treachery. Even AUGUSTUS, with all his patronage and all his attachment to genius, tolerated rope dancers in preference to poets.

The Spanish theatre for the same reason had as little character as the Roman. Those who have read *Gil Blas* will see some notable proofs that poets were subservient to actors. The Portuguese theatre was the shadow of the Spanish, the Italian theatre was a chaos of Greek and Roman rubbish, and the German theatre has as little answered the purpose of the stage, owing to the uncontrolled licence permitted to poets; who, though not of the breed of Aristophanes, are nevertheless as dangerous to society, for they have tainted the manners of Europe, and in particular of England, with productions which violate probability, wound morality, terrify instead of delight, menace instead of conciliate, in short, which among every outrageous and monstrous doctrine, teach filial ingratitude, encourage adultery,

and circulate such revolting and scandalous tenets as thirty years ago would have been spurned at by an English audience with ineffable indignation.

If then we have seen that the conditions upon which alone the theatre can stand firmly upon its true basis were only observed for a short time in primitive Greece, at what time, and among what people, has it ever enjoyed that reputation, which, according to the doctrine here laid down, a combination of certain reciprocal interests are alone capable to give it? I answer from CORNEILLE, to VOLTAIRE, almost uninterruptedly in France, and from SHAKESPEAR to 1777, in England; except during the intervals from the Restoration to BETTERTON's secession, during the fluctuations, immediate previous to CIBBER's management; and from CIBBER's secession to the 1747, when GARRICK became manager.

In France we shall not find any instance when the proprietors of the theatre were managers. Indeed in general they were mere landlords, and paid by a certain rent; for the rest, all which we have particularly seen, the managers were actors, committees of whom decided upon the reception of plays into the theatre which were finally disposed



of by the public; and, in every difference of opinion either concerning authors or actors, or in any other possible way that could affect the interest of the theatre, the parties respectively had a right of appeal to court, where all grievances were redressed, and that the grand object might be always obtained by stimulating the exertions of actors, their various merits were equitably estimated, and, when at length their labours were creditably ended, it became as honourable to retire upon a pension from the stage, as from the army, or the navy.

The face of the English management during those particular periods that I describe wore the same aspect which I have sufficiently gone over in a preceding chapter and which will abundantly prove the position I have here laid down, the most material part of which has this tendency; that, whenever proprietors of theatres, are neither actors nor authors, and are no further connected with the interest of the concern than relates to the emolument it produces, without being responsible for its general fame, the exertions of authors and actors will infallibly be disregarded and the theatre by receiving all its advantage from gewgaws and spectacle will sink from its reputation, its consequence,

and its honour, and lose its influence as a school of morality.

I shall shortly state a few circumstances to confirm this last position and go over some particulars relative to the stage, during the period between GARRICK'S return from Italy and the disposal of the Drury-lane patent; after which I shall take my leave of the reader.

My arguments go to prove that emolument alone, however obtained, has been the view of all those who have bought into the theatres, that the fame and fortune of those men without whose exertions the stage can have no legitimate pretension to public countenance, have never been properly attended to, and that therefore those means have been constantly resorted to, however destructive to the general interest of the theatre, which are most likely to produce the fullest houses.

When the licentiousness of the stage called for the animadversions of PRYNNE, and COLLIER the patents were held by purchasers. When CIBBER came, at which time the proprietors only received a rent, decency and decorum were restored. During the time of HIGHMORE, FLEETWOOD, AMBER,



and GREEN, and indeed till GARRICK, the real interest of the theatre was deserted. Authors and actors were considered as auxiliaries rather than principals, and every species of profligacy and disorder prevailed. During the whole management of GARRICK the theatre enjoyed greater repute than ever it had known. Further than that, to be consistent, I have no title to investigate; but it is nevertheless proper that I make out my position by shewing the danger that may arise from extraneous interest.

Extraneous interest may ruin the theatre. It may consolidate the two theatres into one general interest that may hold authors and actors at defiance, it may stretch the two theatres into the size of four. It may pay enormous expences by laying additional charges on the benefits of authors and actors which benefits, after all, by the admission of free tickets may at last be cut to nothing. It may encourage contemptible performances, which, by the assistance of the newspapers, may be crammed down the throats of the public after being damned on the first night. It may import foreign immorality and call in the assistance of shew and finery, monsters and conjurations, to the annihilation of English merit. All this and a great deal more it

may do. Now let us see how such consequences must infallibly operate.

No theatres in the kingdom, except those in London, produce the smallest novelty. If therefore performances of this description obtain at the two theatres, they go through the whole nation and extend to Ireland, and Scotland, and therefore are sure, the source being contaminated, to poison the general taste. Thus genius, for whose support surely the theatres were originally intended, may retire unknown and neglected to deplore the ingratitude of the most benevolent country upon earth, and therefore, let the theatre be supported by whatever property it may, it can never expect any thing like permanent fame, or fair reputation, unless the primary consideration be the encouragement of authors and actors.

There are yet some gleanings relative to the state of the stage. It is necessary that I should notice by what means the question came to be decided in relation to full price; which, having been originally established to reimburse the expence of new pantomimes, had grown so enormously into an abuse, that managers announced it when they thought proper. This at length produced a riot,



which began at Drury-Lane, where GARRICK, with great good sense, redressed the grievance. Covent-Garden however resisted, under an idea that such performances as *Artaxerxes* were even more expensive than pantomimes, considerable sums being upon those occasions laid out for extra vocal and instrumental performers. The public however persisted, and, upon BEARD's obstinacy, who was very ill advised, they completely gutted the house. The repairs took a fortnight out of the season; and, after a few of the ring-leaders had been imprisoned, and the manager had reflected on his folly, it was agreed that full price should only be allowed during the run of a new pantomime. This stipulated, the house opened with the play of *All's well that Ends well*, and nothing has disturbed this question since.

Nothing material happened after this till the dispute between the Covent Garden managers, a few years after their purchase of the patent. COLMAN had taken care to invest himself with such power by the instrument of partnership drawn up among them, that the Court of Chancery, after a very expensive suit, decreed him competent to decide, without controul, upon every subject; "for," said Baron SMYTHE, who was one of the judges,

the seals being in commission, "otherwise the agreement must have meant, like Trinculo in the play, that he was to be king, and his partners were to be viceroys over him." This dispute was at length amicably adjusted by the secession of COLMAN, who sold his share to the rest of the proprietors.

The business of FOOTE's primitive *Puppet Shew*, which I have already spoken of; FIELDING's left handed interference relative to the *Beggar's Opera*, which he maintained created an additional number of thieves every time it was performed, an assertion the public considered as unfounded, and a bold innovation on their pleasures; MACKLIN's mad business about REDDISH's hissing him, which ended by a legal decision in his favour, and his discharge from the theatre, and GARRICK's retirement, a most awful moment for the stage, are all now which I conceive necessary to notice, unless I were to go into such kind of minutie as in no respect regards the general management of the theatre, or in any respect its credit. I shall therefore merely add, that, in 1776, GARRICK resigned the concern into the hands of the present proprietor; and that on the twentieth of January, 1779, the world had to lament the loss of this admirable and very ex-



traordinary man, the most natural, the most forcible, the most correct, and the most melancholy memento, to whose fame are the words which SHAKESPEAR makes Hamlet apply to his father, and which GARRICK applied to SHAKESPEAR, "We shall not look upon his like again."

To this period I confine myself as the proper boundary to a History of the Stage. For my own part I will not toil any further. I have not the heart, the conscience, the courage to do it; and, if any other should chuse to risk the consequences of pursuing such a task, I heartily wish him well through his fatigue. In my idea, the catastrophe is accomplished, the play is over, and therefore I drop the curtain at the death of GARRICK; but, as the truth of this position will be questioned, it is but fit I give the most satisfactory reasons in my power for this conduct. I am but a servant of the public, and, born for their use, I live but to oblige them.

Because then I will not incur the suspicions of an invidious wish to wound the feelings of men who, be their abilities what they may, exert that portion of talents with which nature has favoured them for the rational amusement of the public; and who,

if they fail, have frequently to thank false taste in the encouragement of fanciful, experimental, and innovating writers, to the outrage of probability, truth, reason, and the exclusion of weeping nature and offended morality, I drop the curtain at the death of GARRICK.

Because, in pursuing the truth and fidelity of an historian, I will not run a risk of reiterating the miseries and theatrical troubles in the reign of FLEETWOOD, I drop the curtain at the death of GARRICK.

Because I will not painfully rouse my feelings to deplore that the public will not wake from their supineness, rally their pride, resume their judgment, and even pity their own weakness in permitting the public prints, in the place of honest truth and fair candour, to set up a corrupt system of puffing, of palming off miserable dross for sterling gold, and of dictating to audiences prescribed principles by which they are arrogantly required to applaud what their duty to their pride, to their understandings, to their feelings, to their relatives, and to society, forbids them to tolerate, I drop the curtain at the death of GARICK.



Lastly, because I will not go into the disgraceful and hateful task, of reprobating, in merited terms, the conduct of managers in establishing, or the want of spirit in the public in permitting, coffee-rooms, lobbies, and other receptacles, for the avowed purpose of giving opportunity to estrange the affections of young men from their parents, and of husbands from their wives and families, by an open, unmasked, and shameless intercourse with prostitutes, to which places they are virtually invited by public advertisement, as a lounge previous to their admission at half price, to the disgust, annoyance, and terror of modesty. For these and many, many, other cogent and similar reasons, I DROP THE CURTAIN AT THE DEATH OF GARRICK.

THE END.





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